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Christian Durieux
An Enchantment

A Graphic Poem

LOUVRE
éditions

Comics Lit

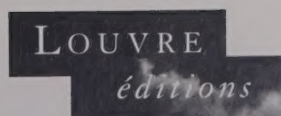
Eyes closed it's her entirely
Paul Eluard, "In exile."

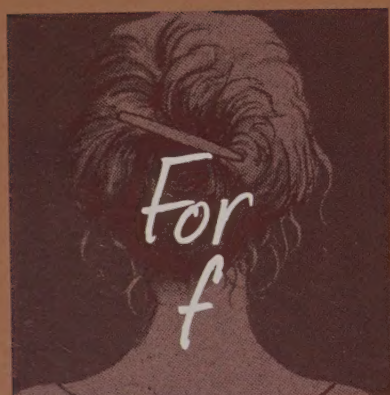
So we shall recount what a true night is.
An enchanted, free night. A night for all nights.
A woman for all women.
Yes, right: a lesson of the night.

Philippe Sollers, "Le cavalier du Louvre"

An Enchantment

Christian Durieux





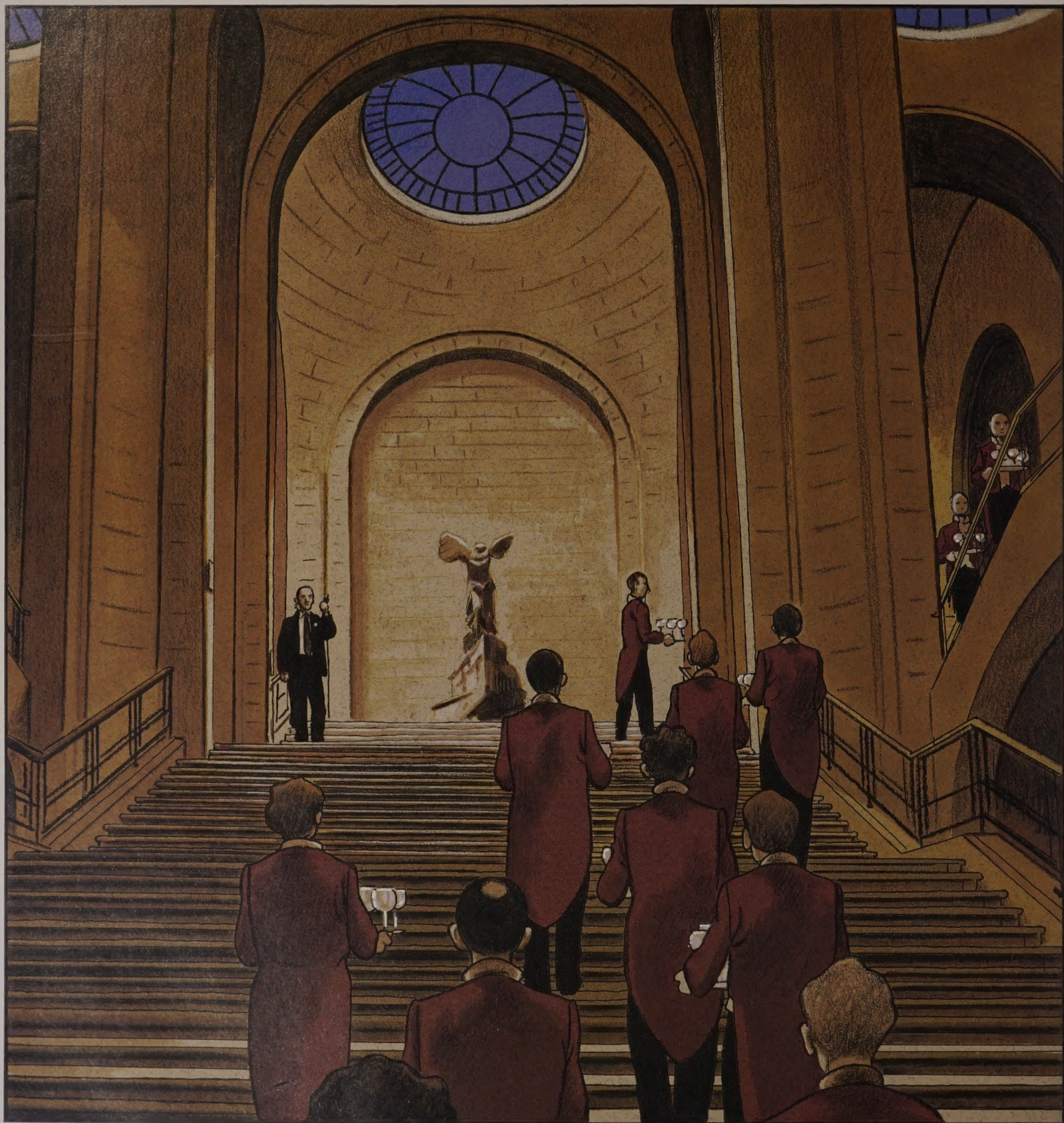
To the memory of my father, to my mother.

*To Jean-Marc and Véronique, Valérie
and Laurent, Laurence and Yves, lovely people.*

*To those who, in their own way, also made this book:
Sébastien, Fabrice, Patrice, Fabien,
Celia, Didier, Evelyne, Elise, Claude, Alain.*

And a big thanks to Chrystel, queen of photo editing.







WHAT IMBECILES, GOOD GOD!





WHAT IMBECILES.

WHOM DO THEY
TAKE ME FOR?

THIS RIDICULOUS BANQUET.
HERE...UNDER THE TYRANT'S NOSE.



MAYBE THEY'RE NOT SUCH IMBECILES AFTER
ALL. THEY'RE CAPABLE OF IRONY.



THEY'RE MOCKING ME. THEY'RE TELLING
THEMSELVES THAT A FEAST WILL FLATTER
HIM. POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE.



THEY'RE TELLING THEMSELVES WE'LL PLAY
A GOOD JOKE ON THE OLD MAN. HE WON'T
SEE US LAUGHING ON THE SLY. HE'LL BE
HAPPY, GLUTTED BENEATH THE EMPEROR. I
KNOW HOW THEY WHISPER BEHIND MY BACK.



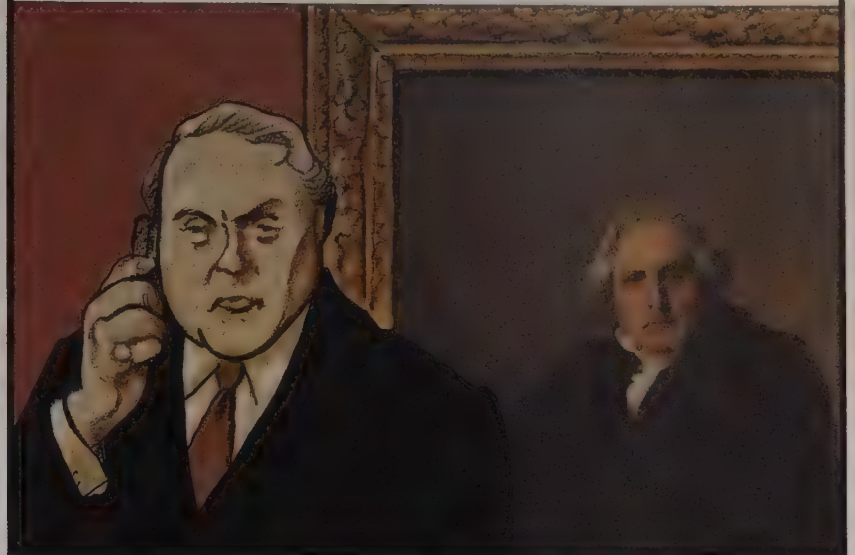
"NAPOLEON AND HE MAKE
QUITE THE PAIR OF DES-
POTS." ALL THE SAME, I
HAVE A SENSE OF PROPOR-
TION... OR OF TASTE.



GOOD GOD, ALL THOSE PREGNANT WOMEN'S
DRESSES! WHAT AN ERA.



AH! BERTAUT...HE'S VERY MUCH IN HIS ELEMENT.



AND DE LA MOTTE, MAGNIFICENT!



THEY'RE PERFECT! THEY TAKE TO THIS LIKE DUCKS TO WATER.



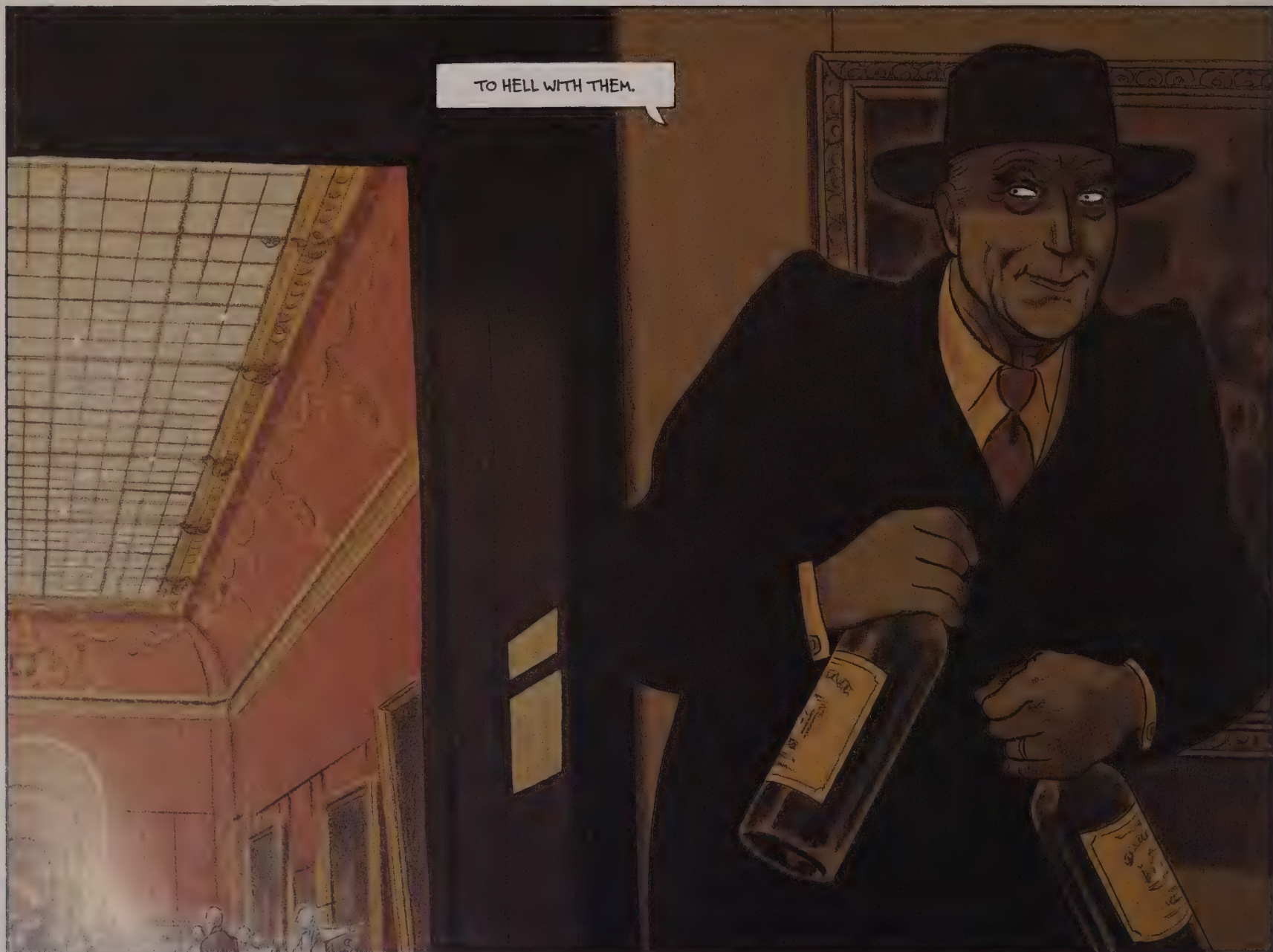
IT'S THEIR CROWNING MOMENT
THIS EVENING, NOT MINE.



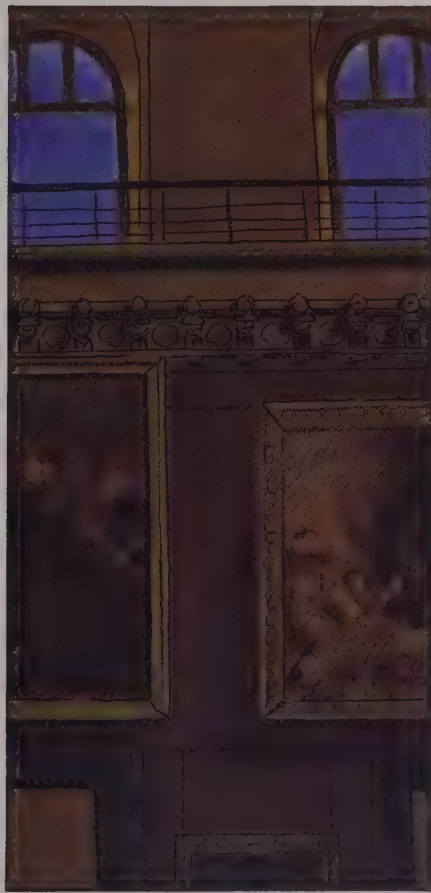
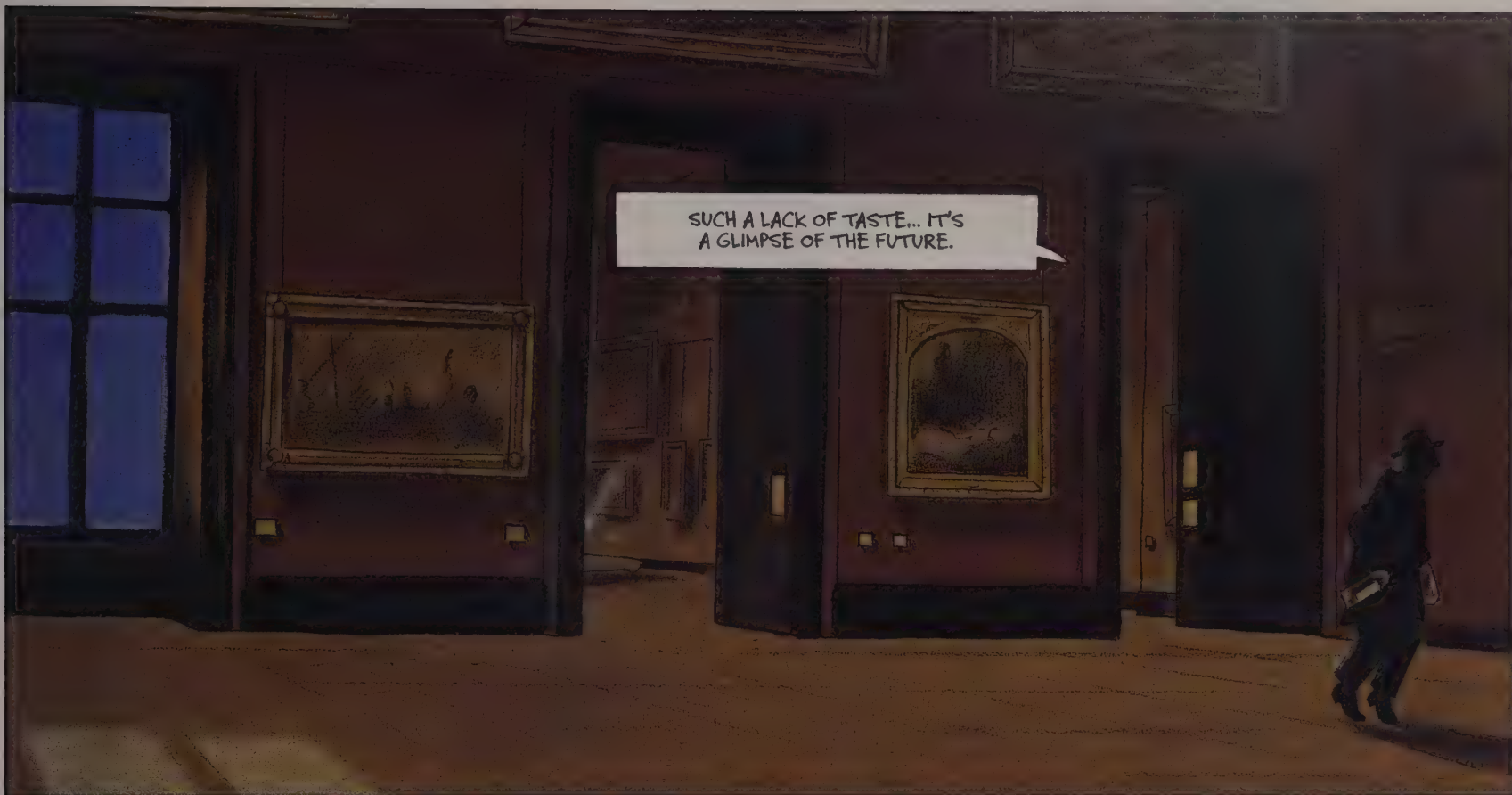


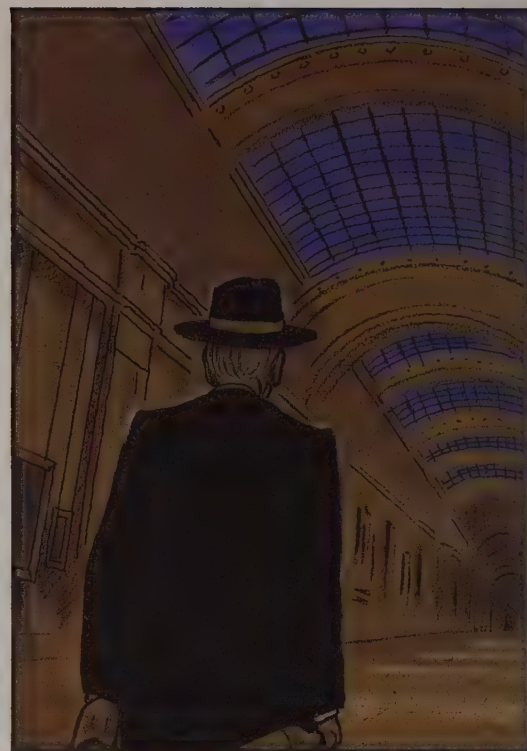
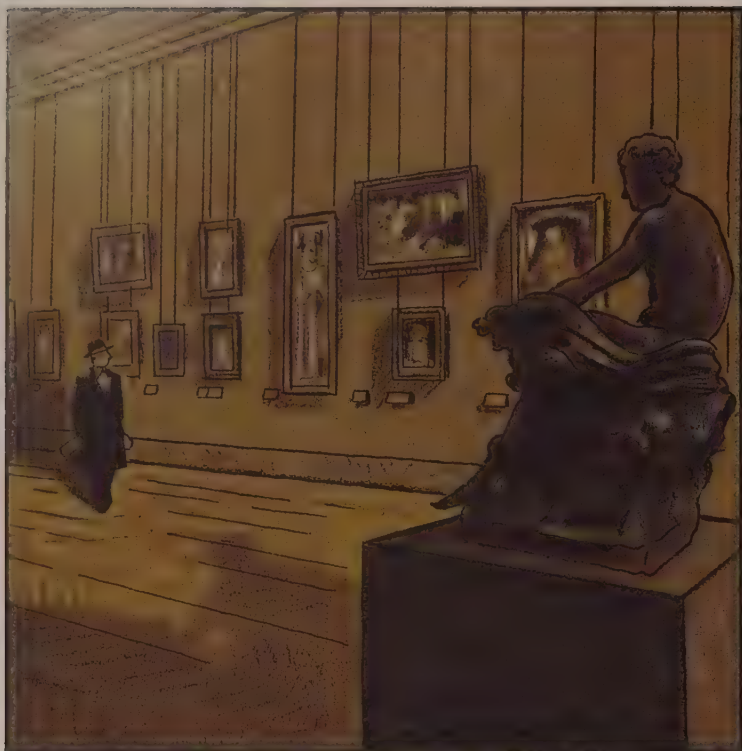
I'LL LET THEM CELEBRATE
THIS AMONG THEMSELVES.

I CAN DECIDE FOR MYSELF
ABOUT MY FUNERAL.



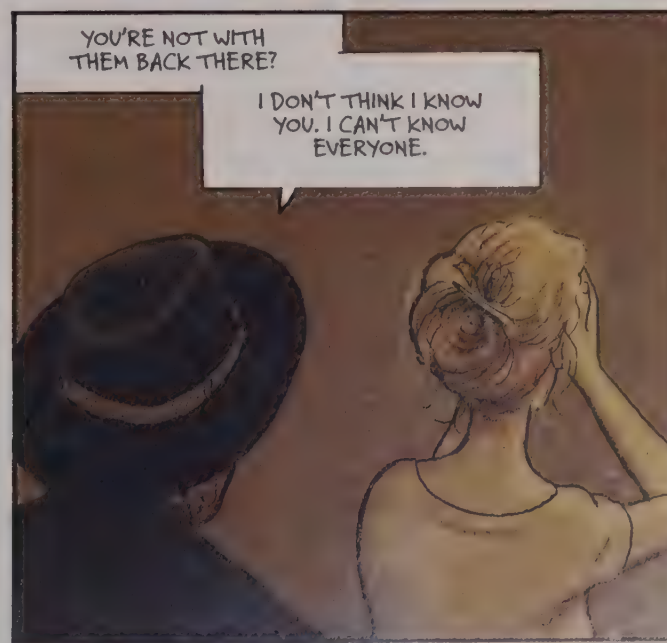
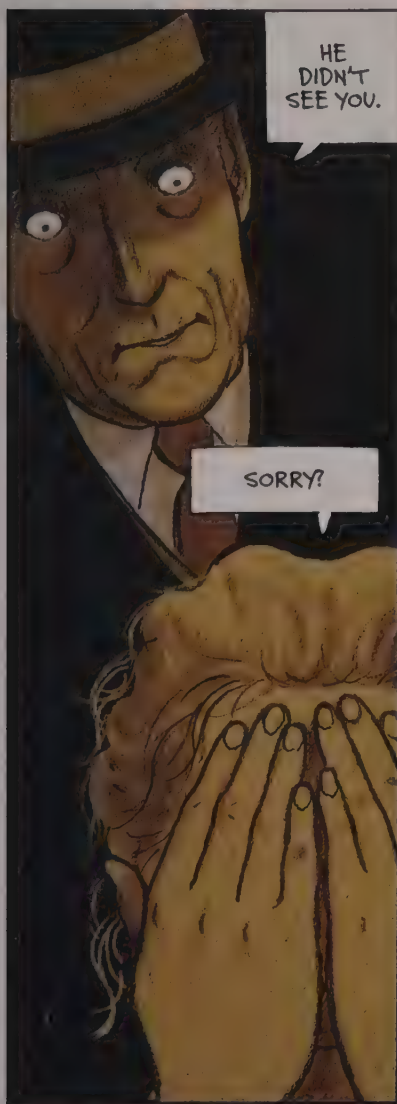
TO HELL WITH THEM.

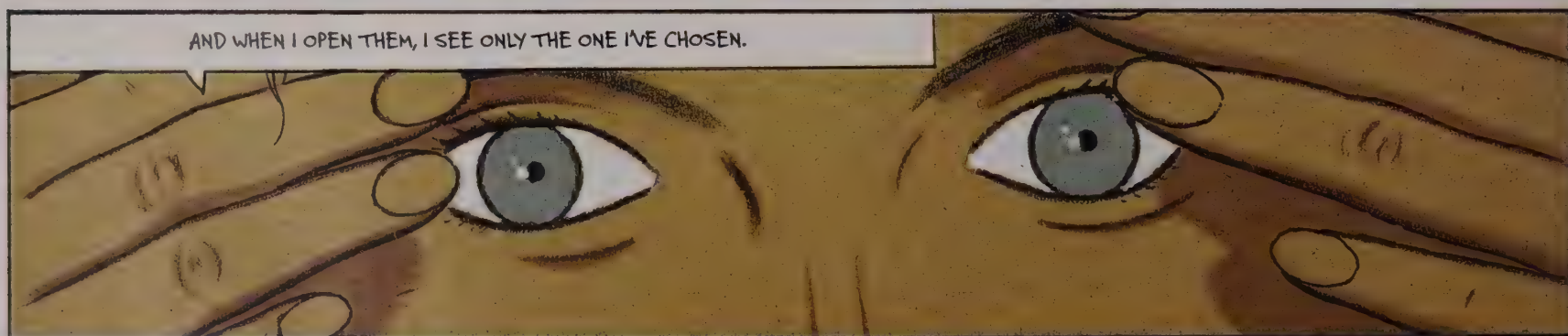
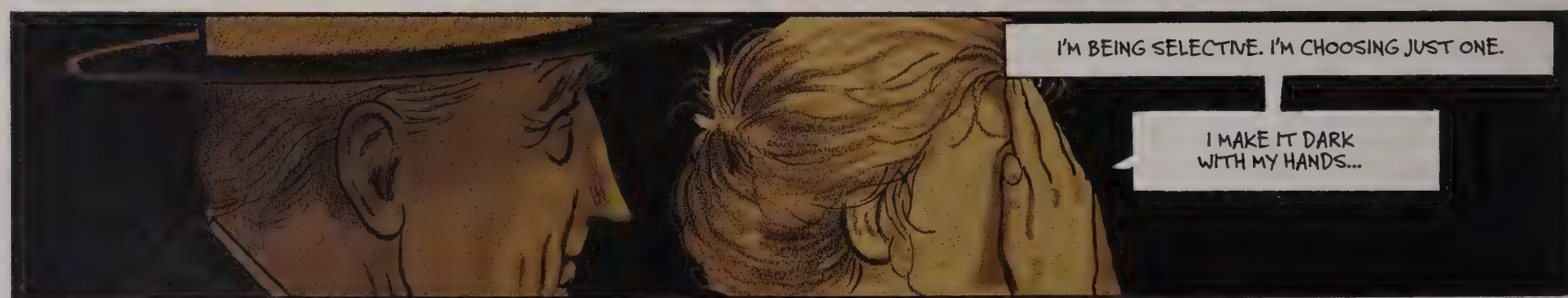
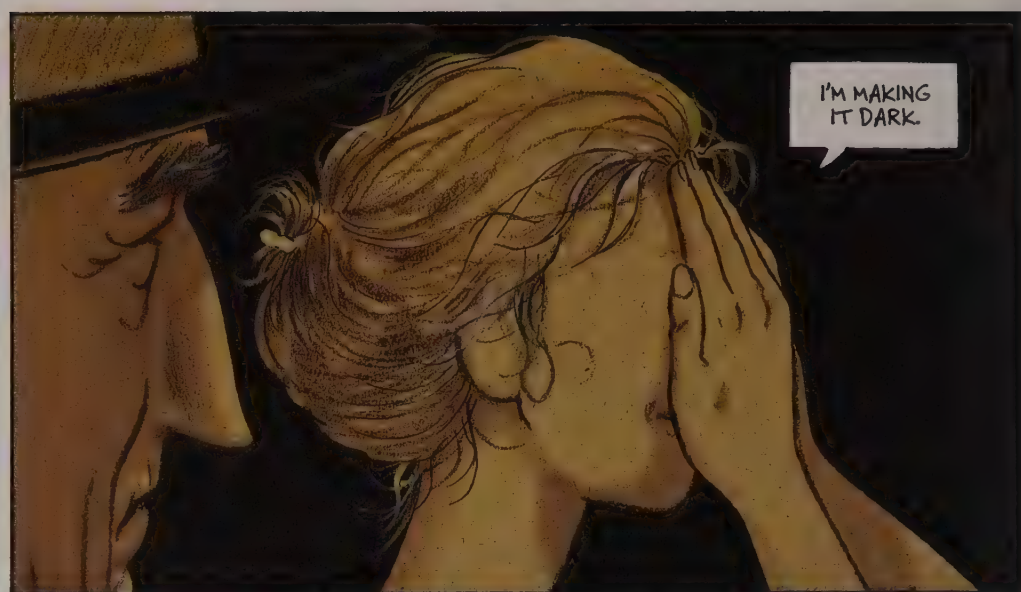


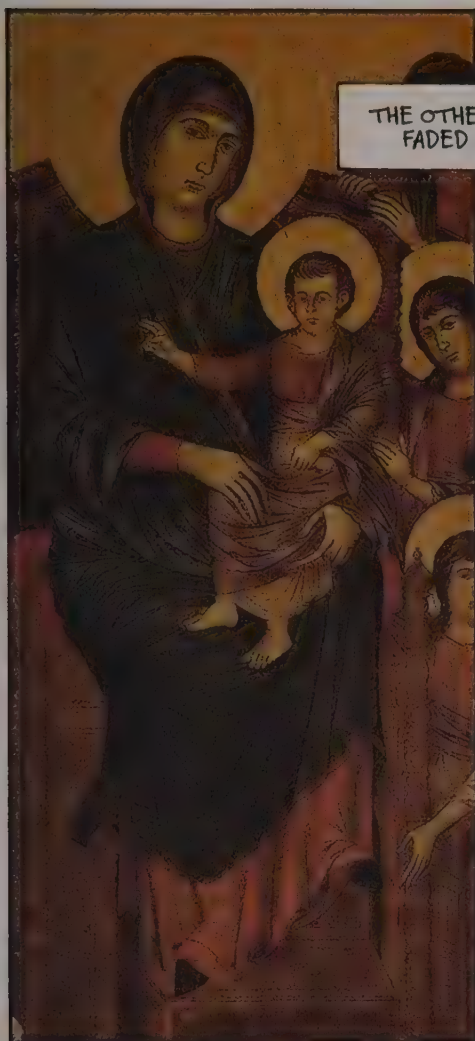








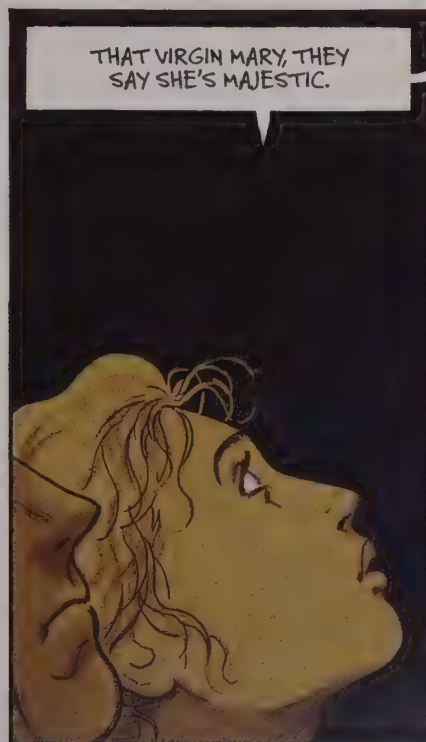




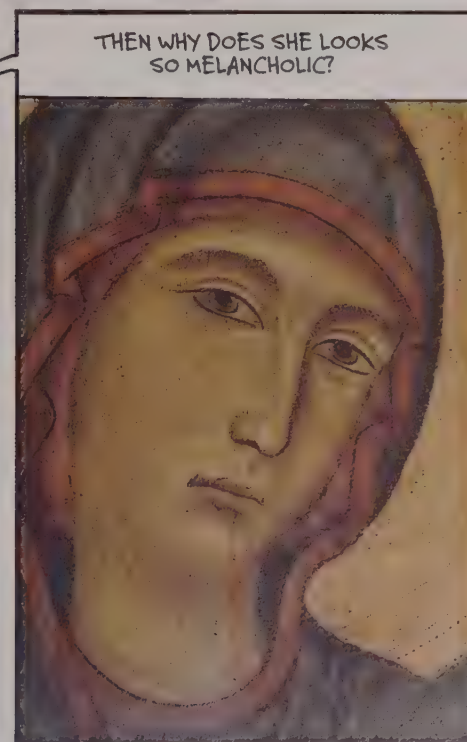
THE OTHERS HAVE
FADED AWAY.



I CAN SEE FULLY.



THAT VIRGIN MARY, THEY
SAY SHE'S MAJESTIC.



THEN WHY DOES SHE LOOKS
SO MELANCHOLIC?



YES, IT'S NOT THE SAME KIND OF MAJESTY.

SORRY?



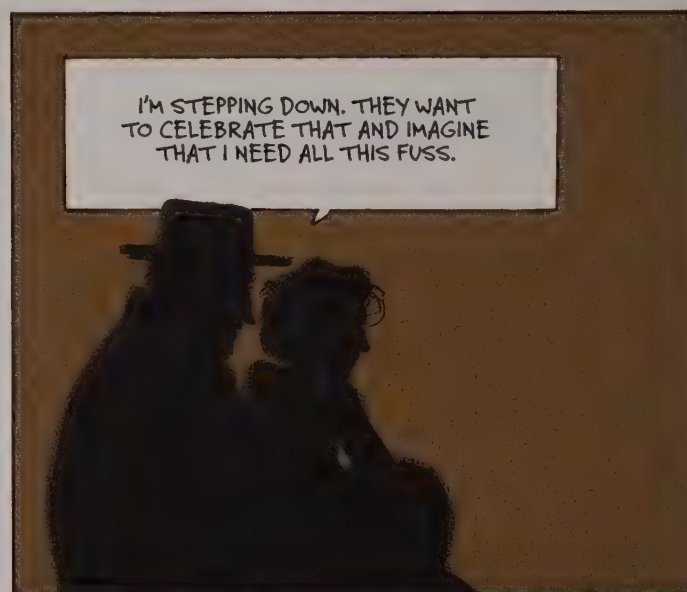
IT'S NOTHING. I WAS THINKING ABOUT THEM BACK THERE.

THEY'RE DOING ALL THAT FOR YOU?

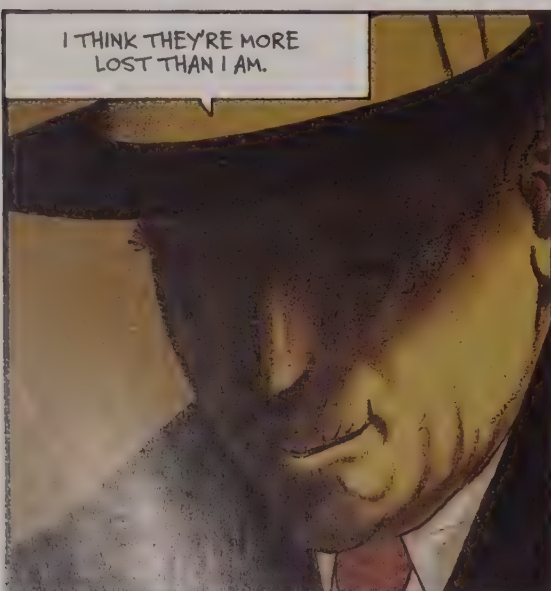


YES. YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME?

YES, OF COURSE.



I'M STEPPING DOWN. THEY WANT TO CELEBRATE THAT AND IMAGINE THAT I NEED ALL THIS FUSS.



I THINK THEY'RE MORE LOST THAN I AM.

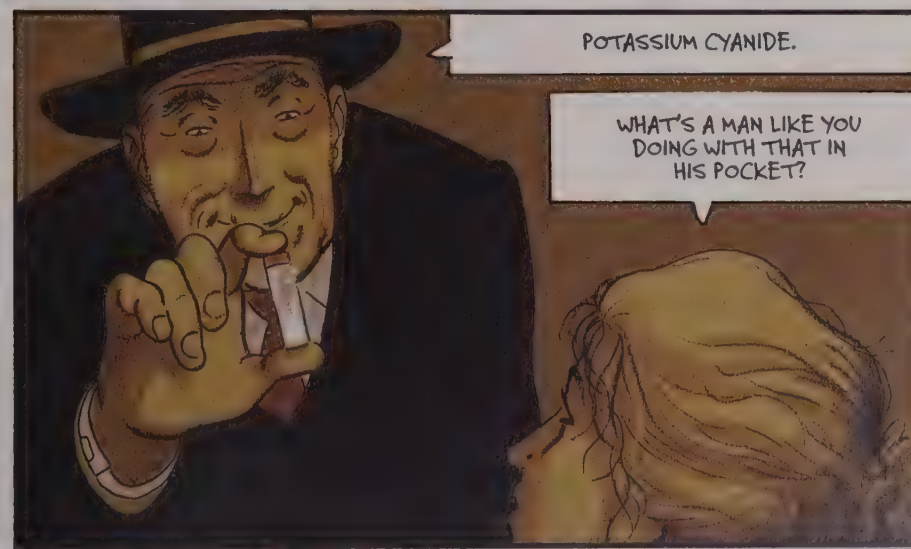


YOU?

ME...I'VE DONE MY BIT.

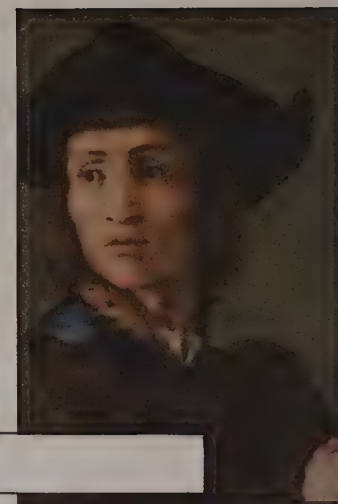
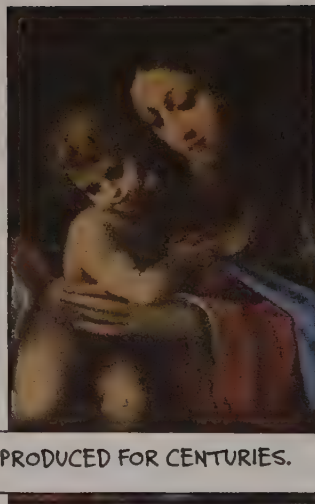
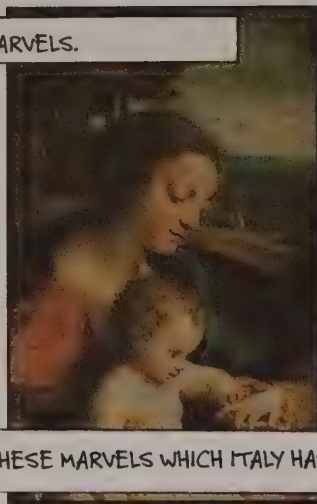
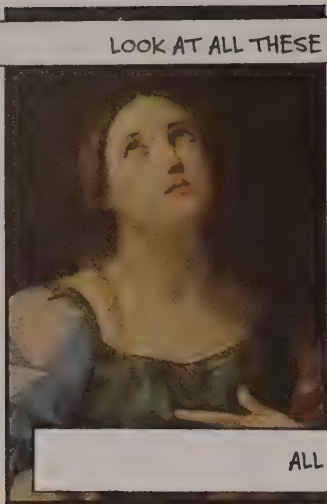


I DON'T NEED THE EMPEROR TO CROWN IT ALL.









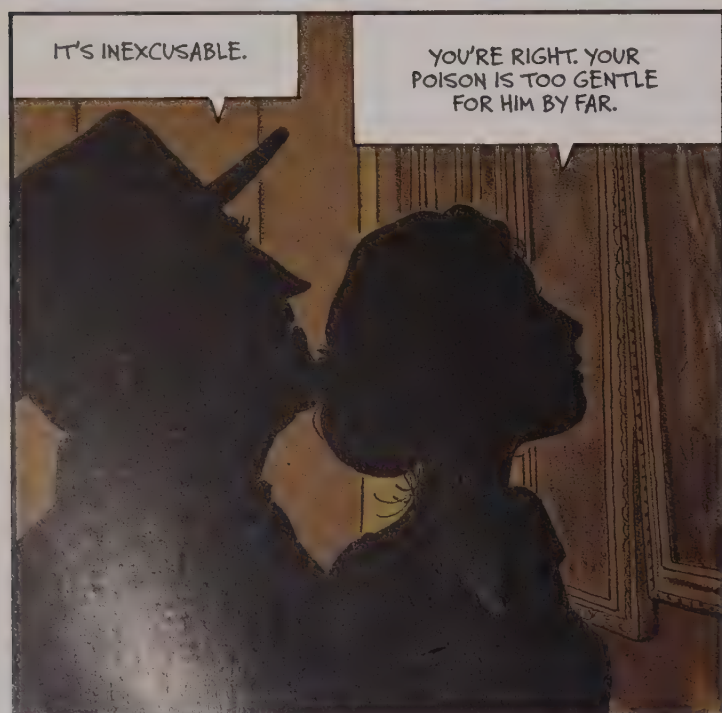
LOOK AT ALL THESE MARVELS.

ALL THESE MARVELS WHICH ITALY HAS PRODUCED FOR CENTURIES.



HIS CRUDENESS
SOILED EVERYTHING.

HE TRAMPLED
ON EVERY-
THING.



IT'S INEXCUSABLE.

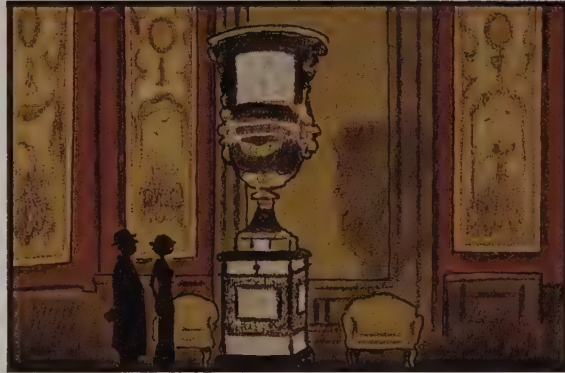
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOUR
POISON IS TOO GENTLE
FOR HIM BY FAR.

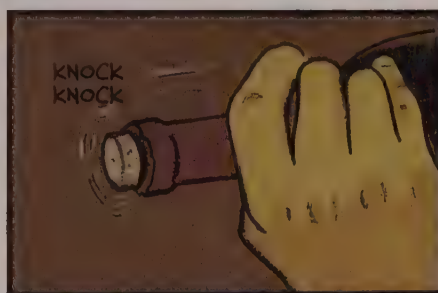


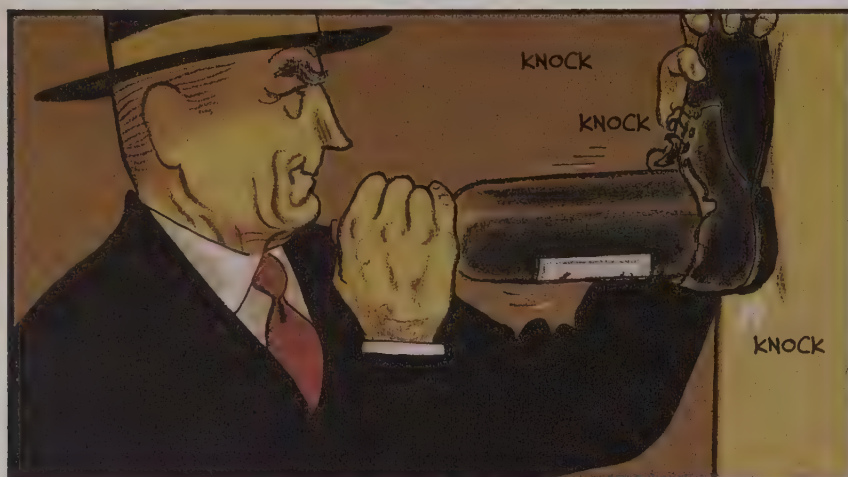
I SHOULD HAVE
DRAGGED HIM BEFORE
THE TRIBUNAL AT
THE HAGUE.

OR BETTER, HAVE HIM
DRAWN AND QUARTERED
ON THE TOWN SQUARE.

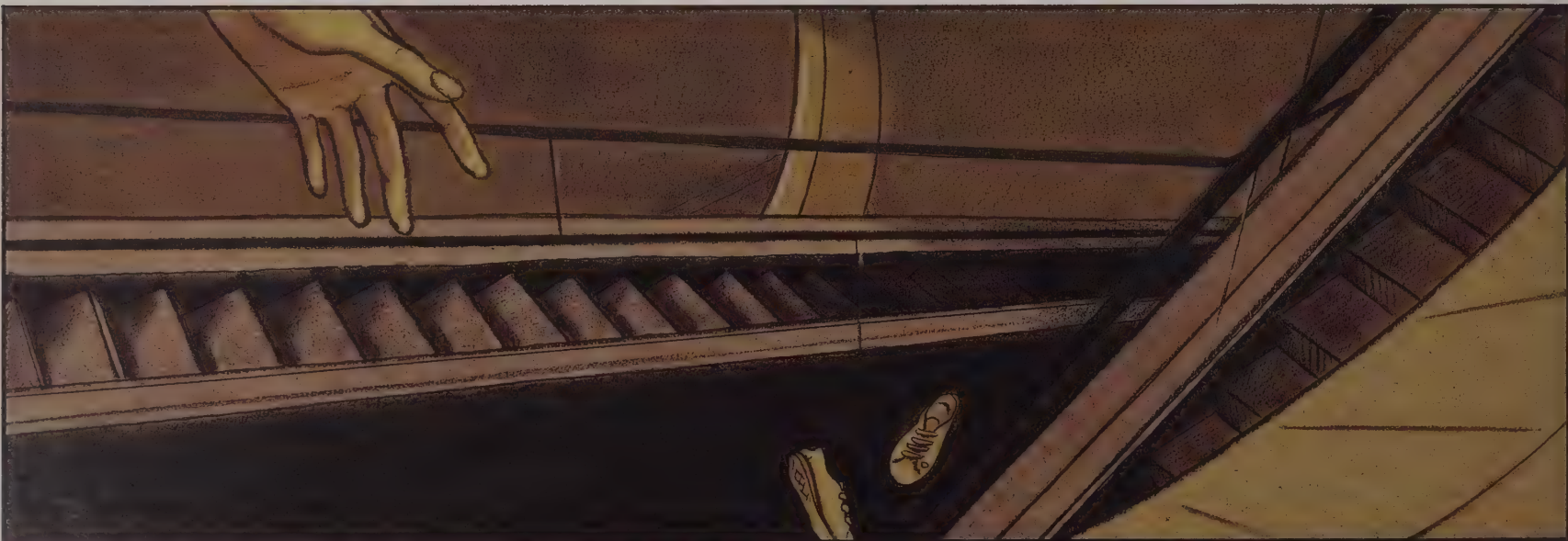


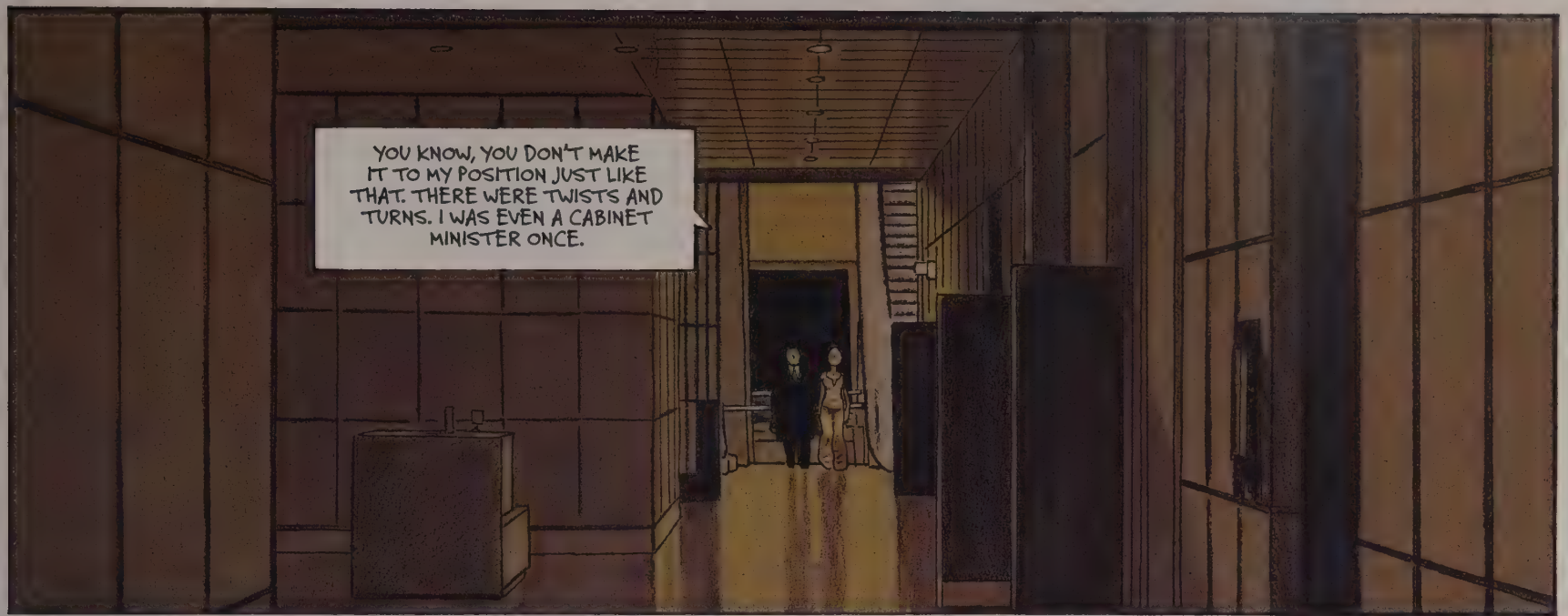


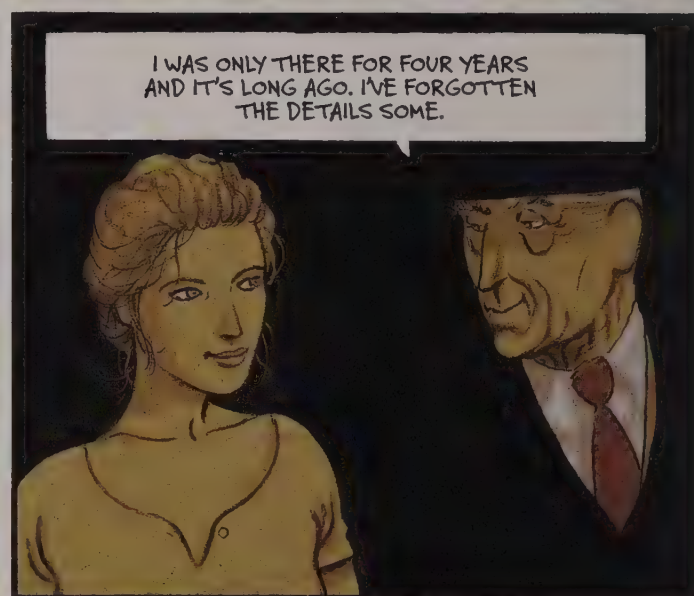
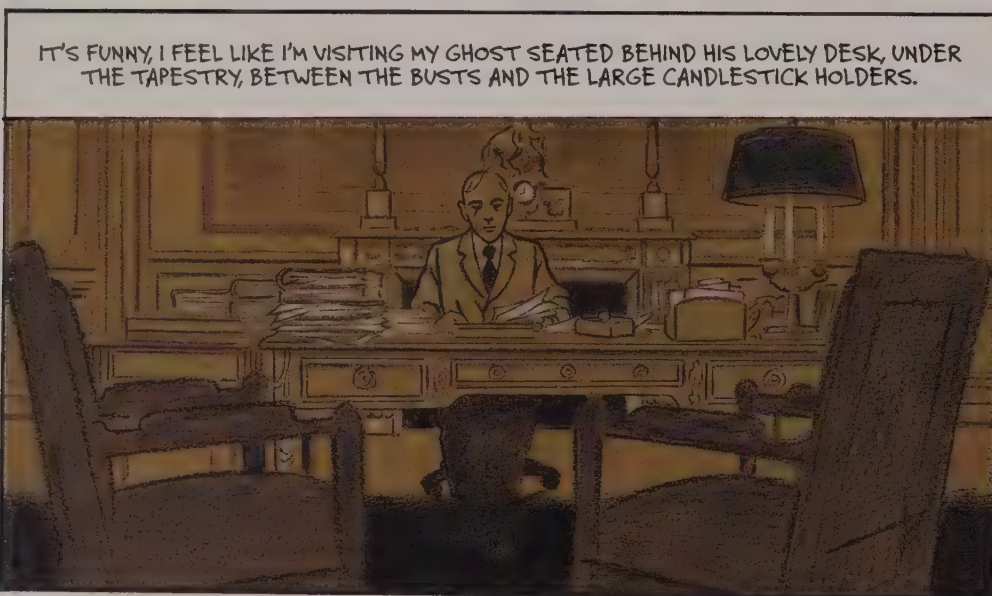
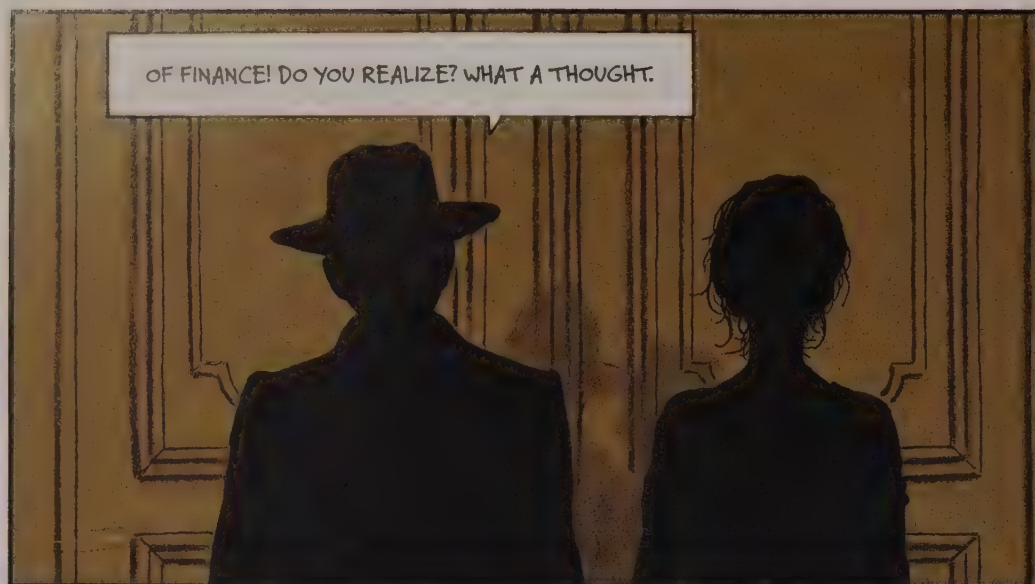




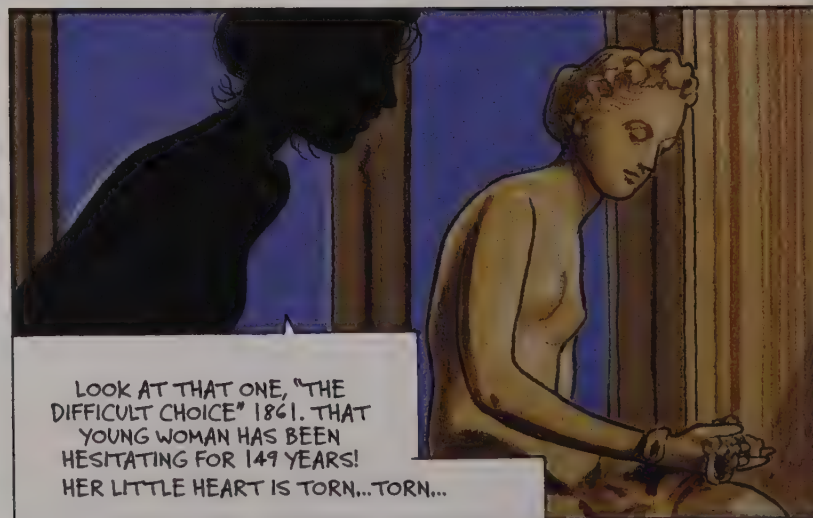
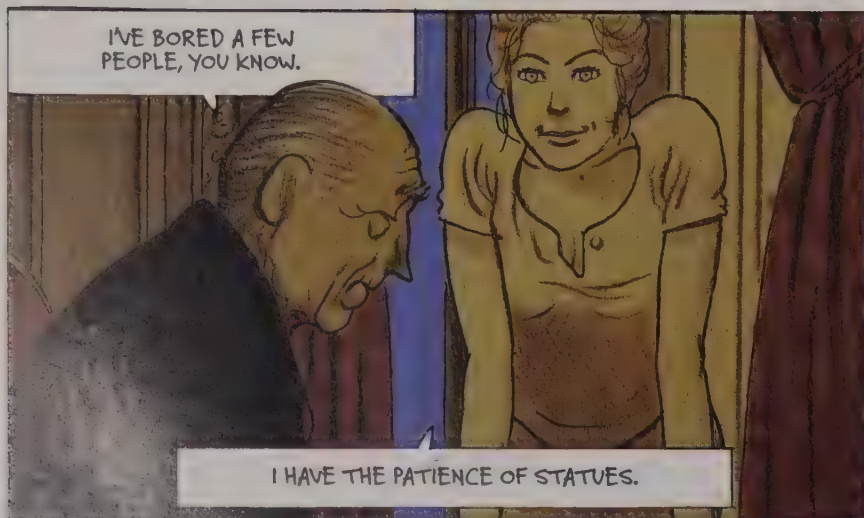
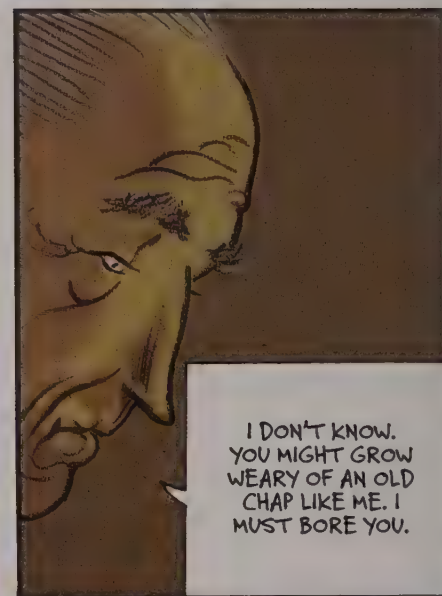
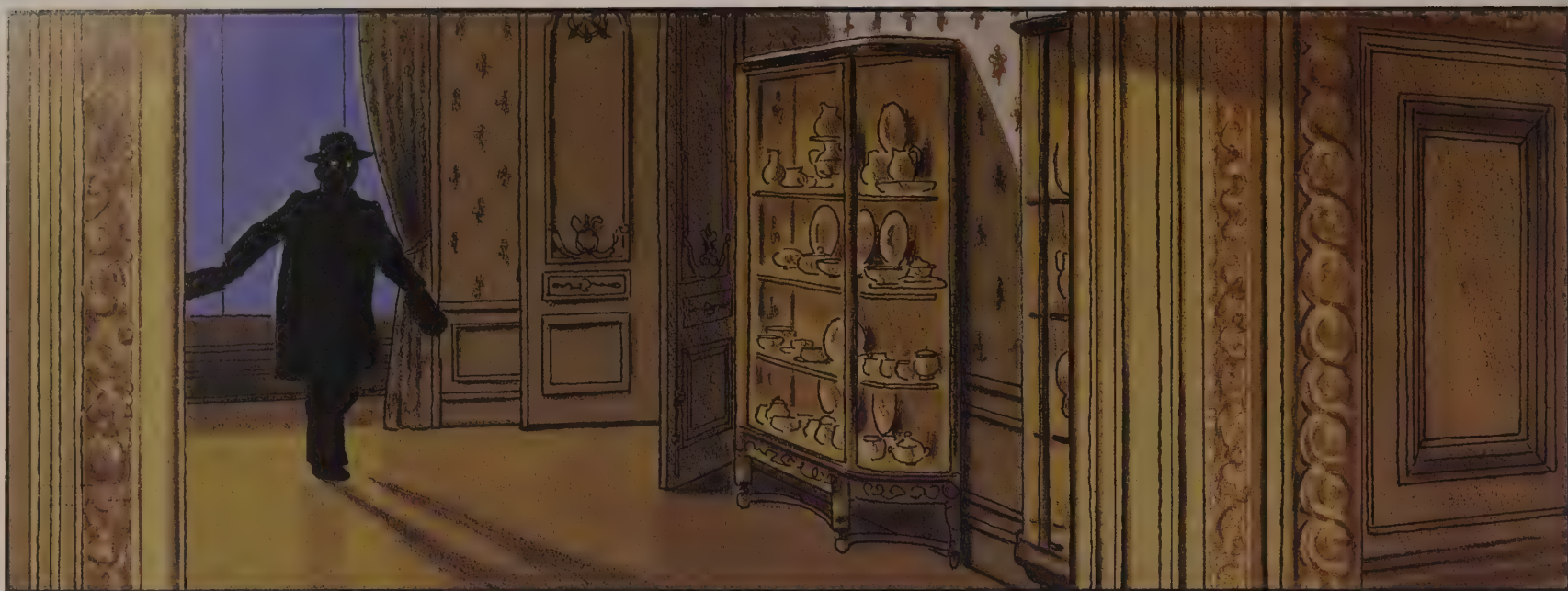


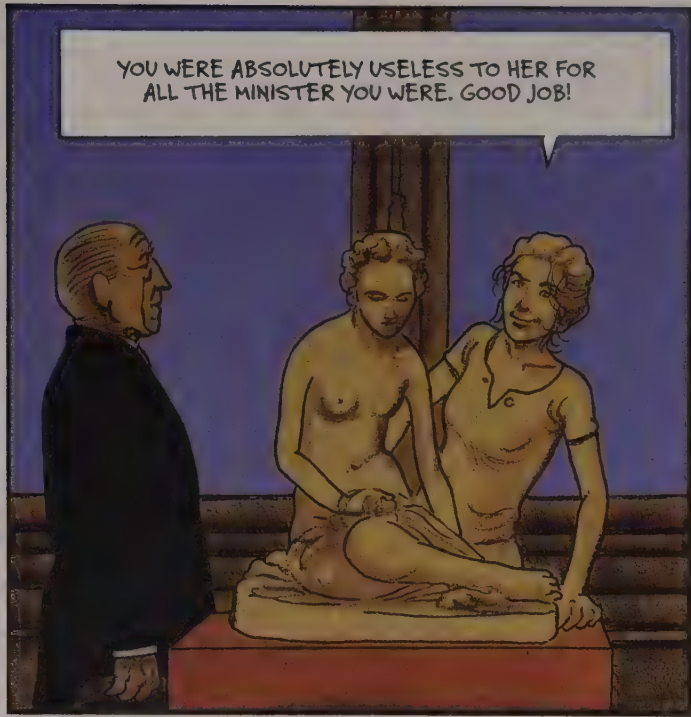


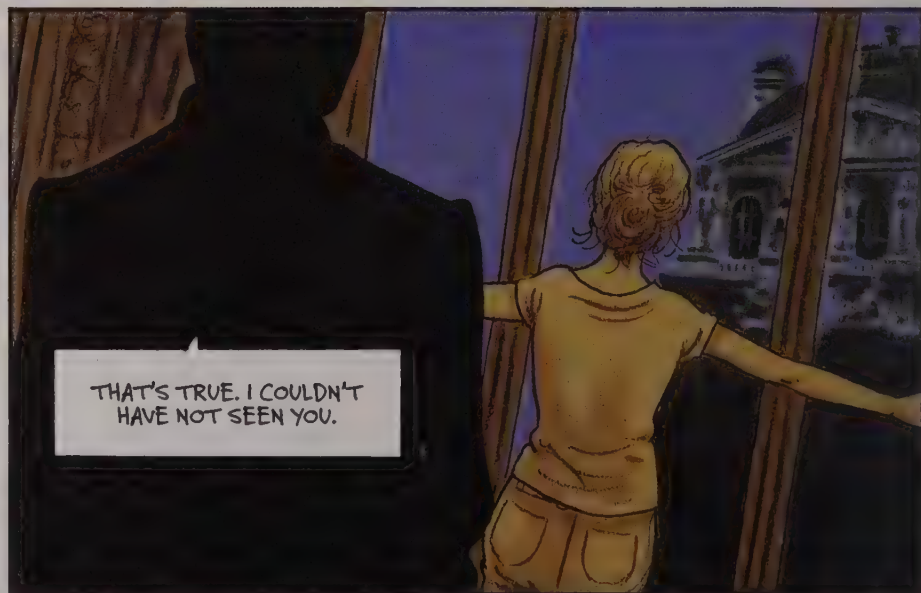


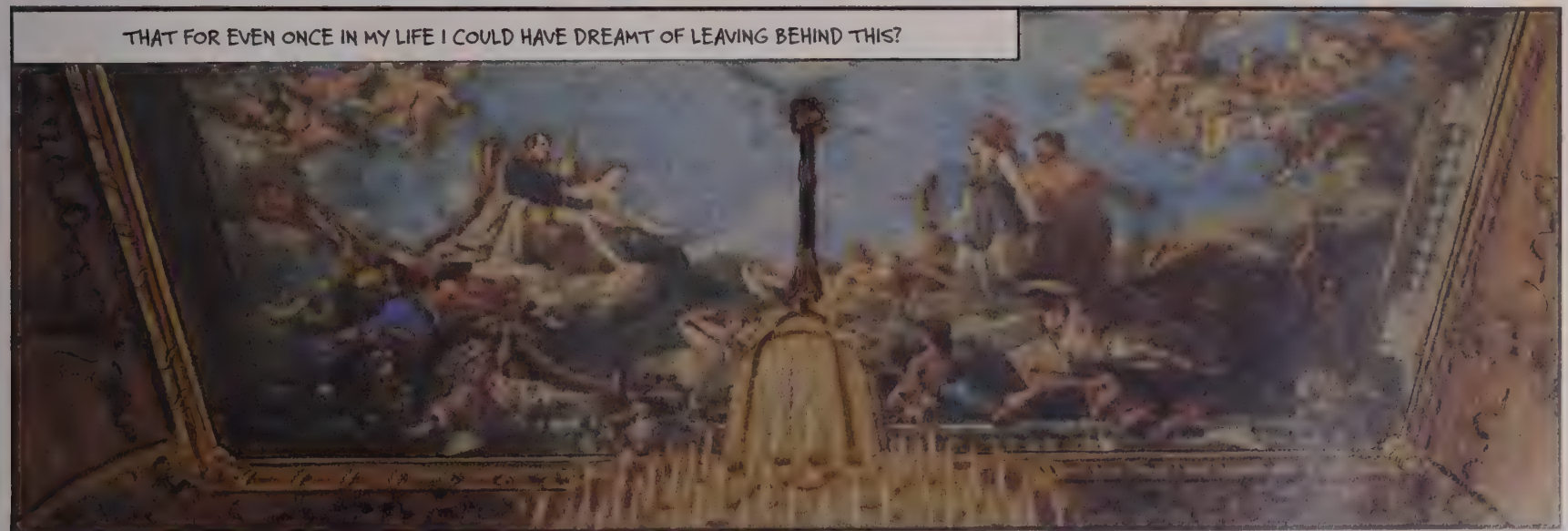
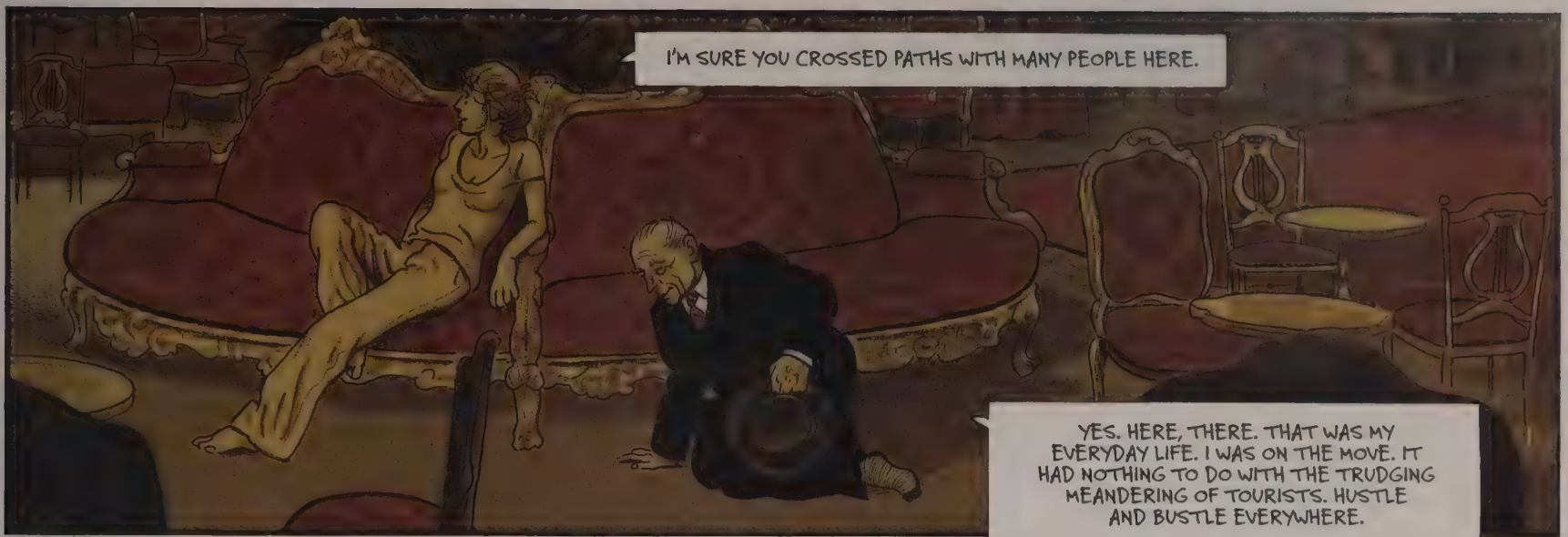












"THE REUNITING OF THE LOWRE AND THE TUILERIES
BY NAPOLEON III!" TAKES SOME DOING, UH?



I'M SMALL FRY COMPARED
TO THAT.



JUST IMAGINE MINERVA AND HERCULES
COMING TO VISIT ME! AND ALL THOSE
ANGELS TO GLORIFY ME!



FOR FOUR YEARS I
PASSED BY HERE, I'D
STOP, AND WOULD LOOK
AT THAT CEILING.



SOMEONE WOULD
STOP BY YOU AND SAY
TO YOU: "MONSIEUR
THE MINISTER,"

YES?

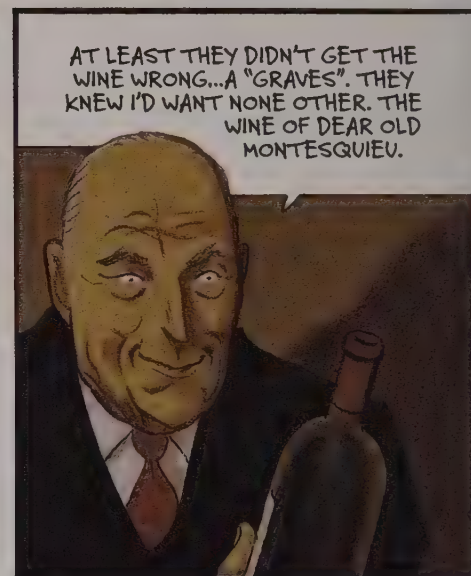


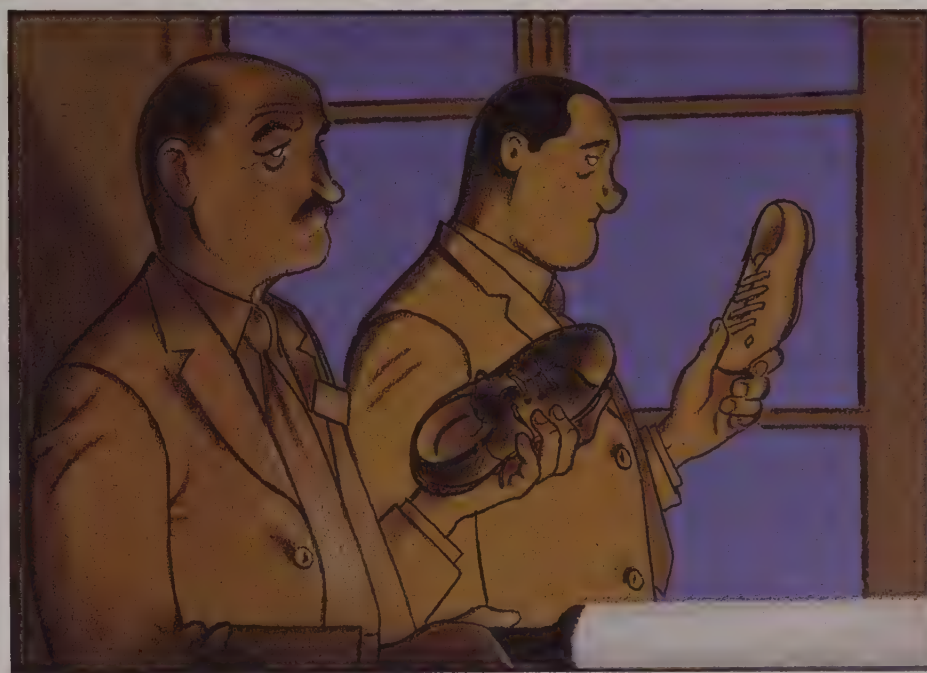
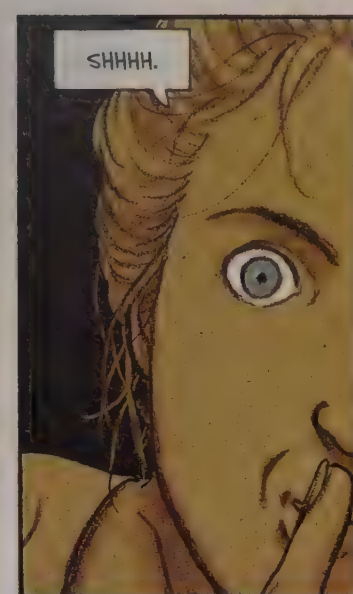
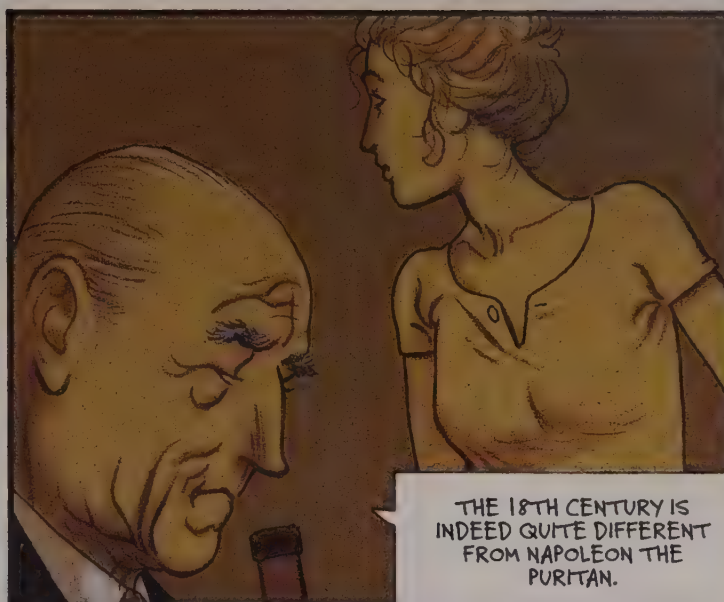
YOU, TOO, WILL
DO GREAT THINGS.

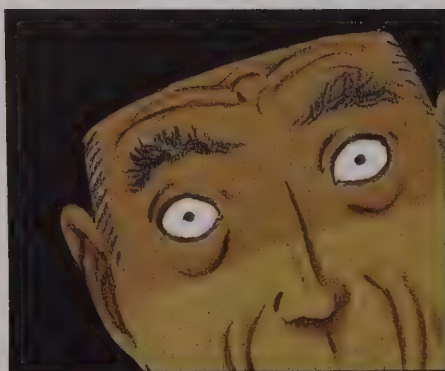
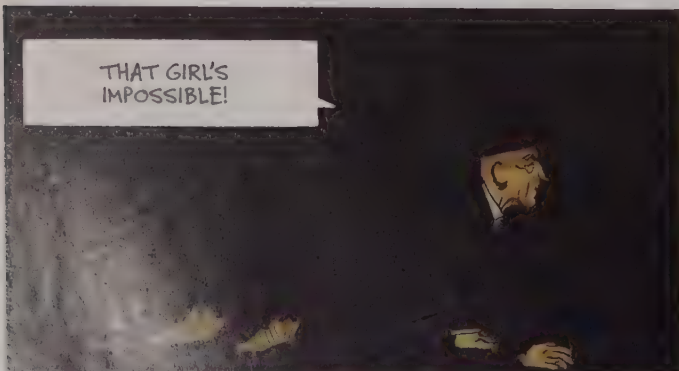
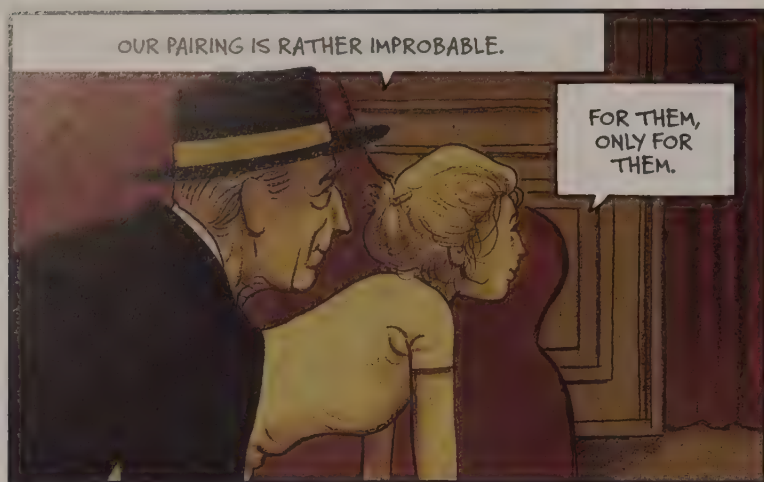
WILL I ALSO HAVE
A BEAUTIFUL
SCEPTER?

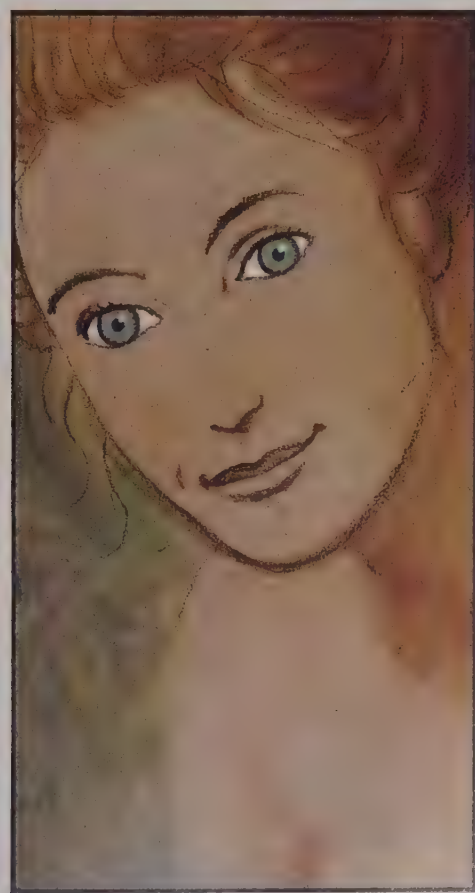
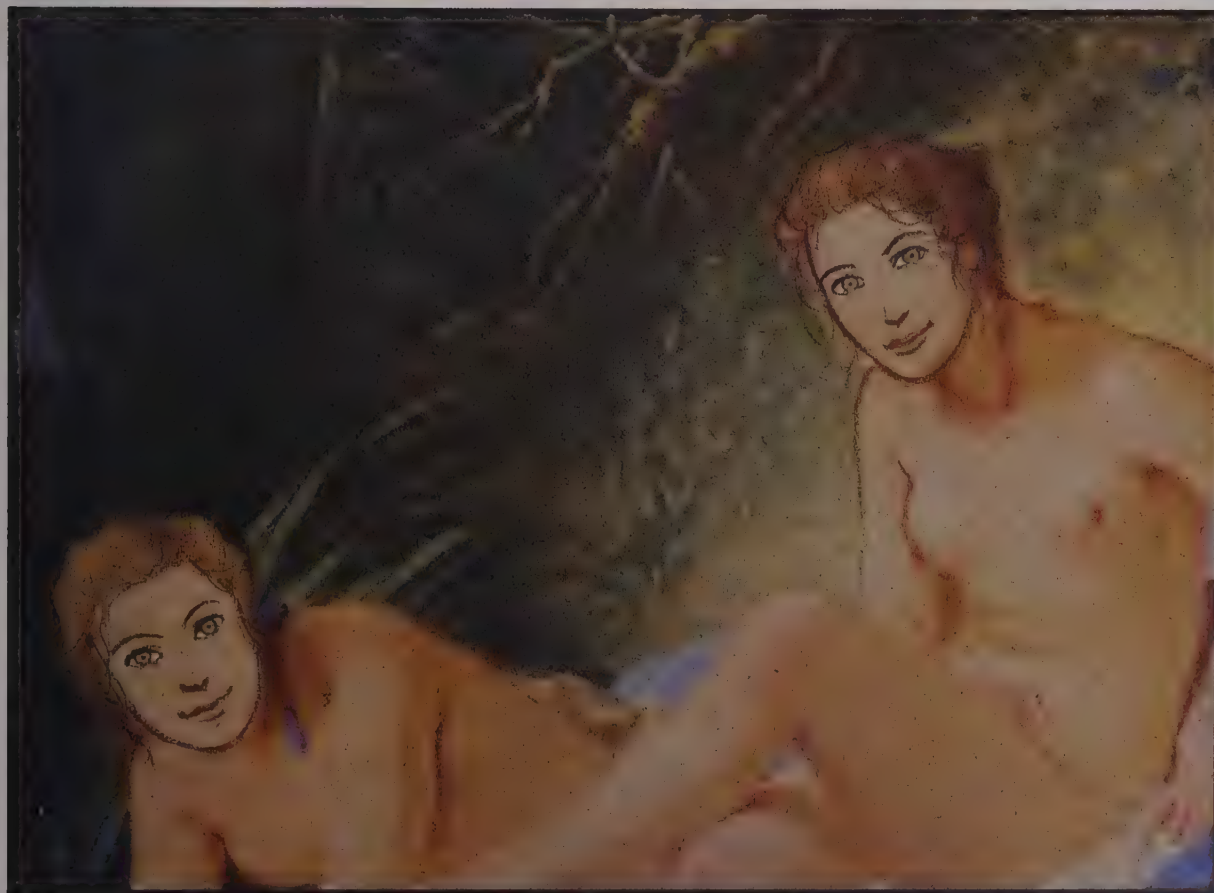


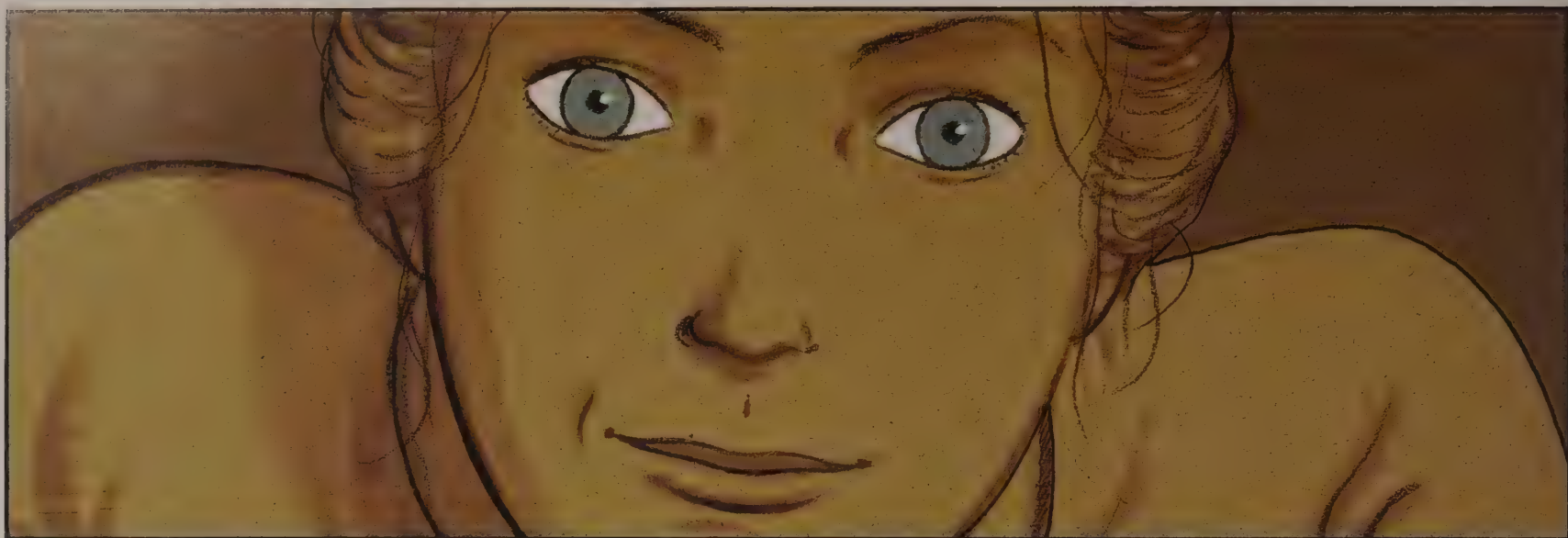


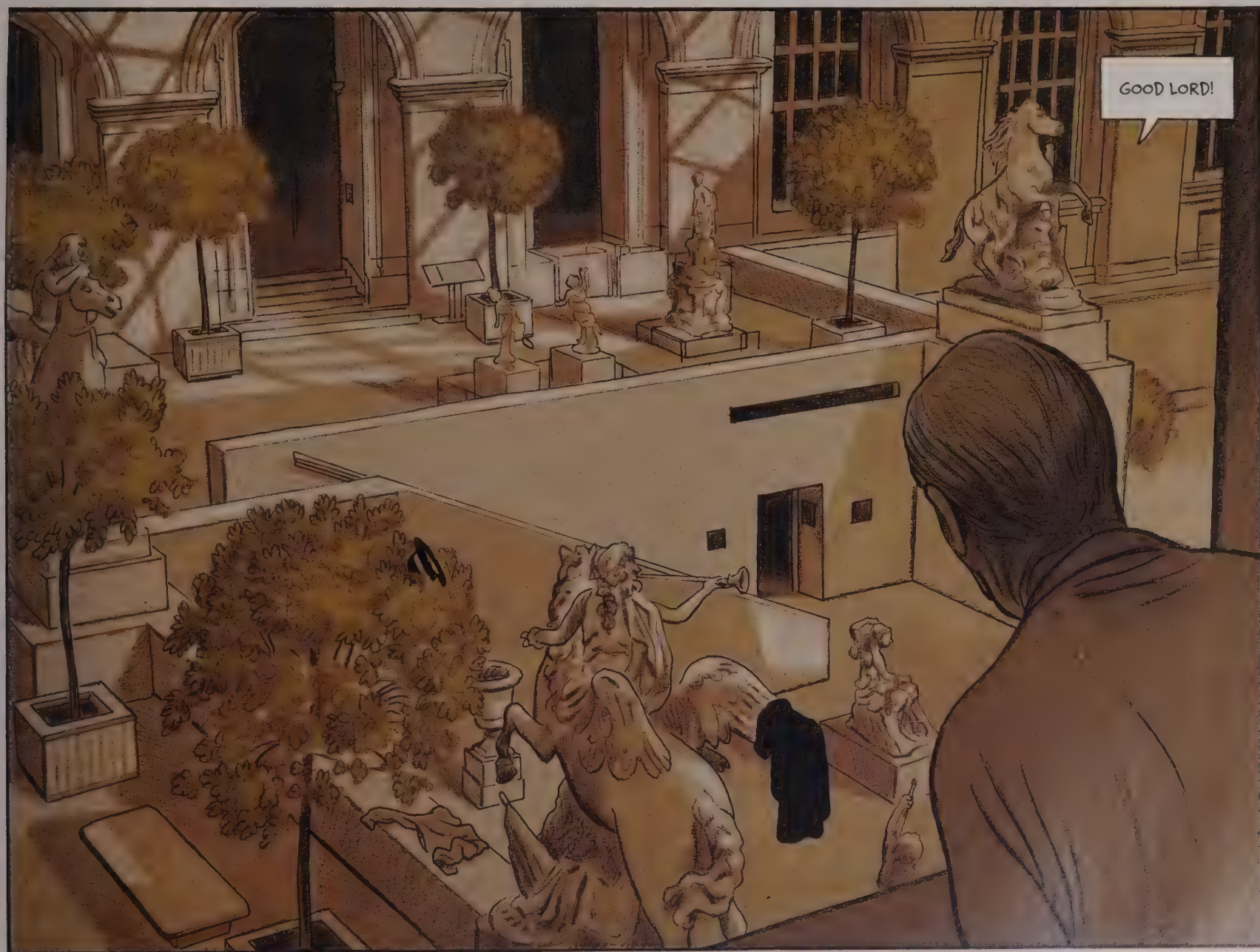




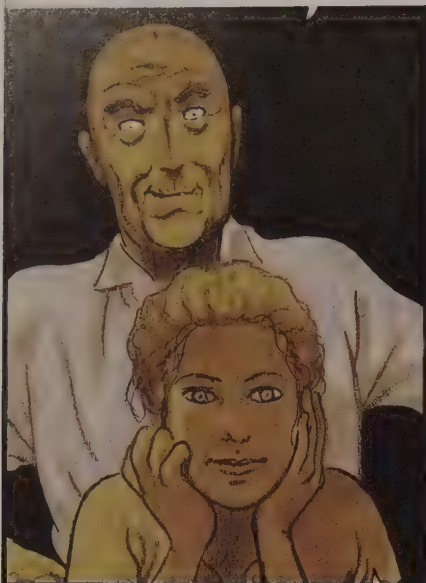








YOU'RE QUITE THE CHARACTER!



BACK IN THE DAYS OF YOUR
OFFICE, WAS THAT YOUR
BATHROOM DOWN THERE?

IT WAS OUR
PARKING LOT.



AND THE STATUES?

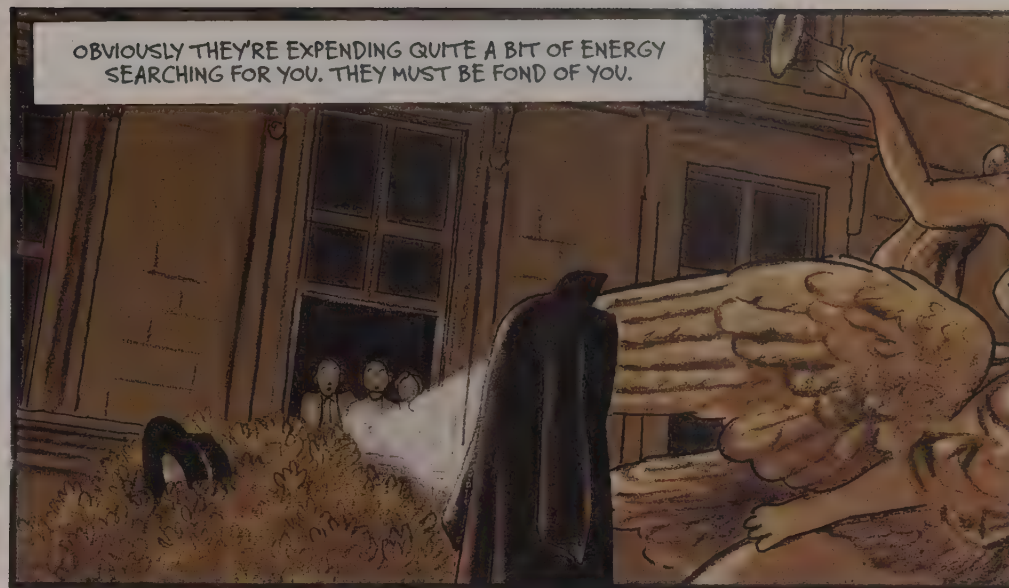


THEY WEREN'T THERE, THE STAIRS EITHER, OF COURSE. OR ANYTHING. IT WAS ALL DIFFERENT.





HEY, IT'S ALREADY
GETTING LIVELY.
WE WON'T HAVE
ANY PEACE.

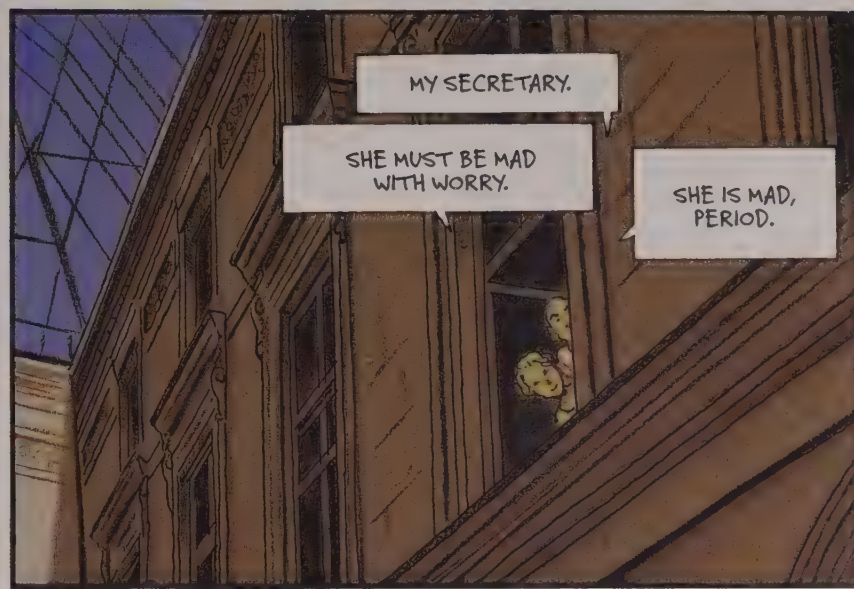


OBVIOUSLY THEY'RE EXPENDING QUITE A BIT OF ENERGY
SEARCHING FOR YOU. THEY MUST BE FOND OF YOU.



GOOD LORD, EVEN LA MOTTE'S WITH THEM!

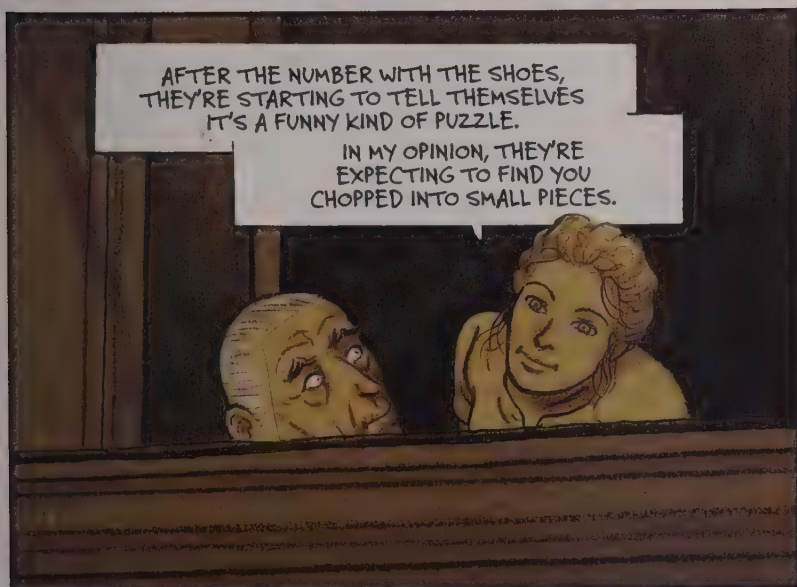
WHO?



MY SECRETARY.

SHE MUST BE MAD
WITH WORRY.

SHE IS MAD,
PERIOD.



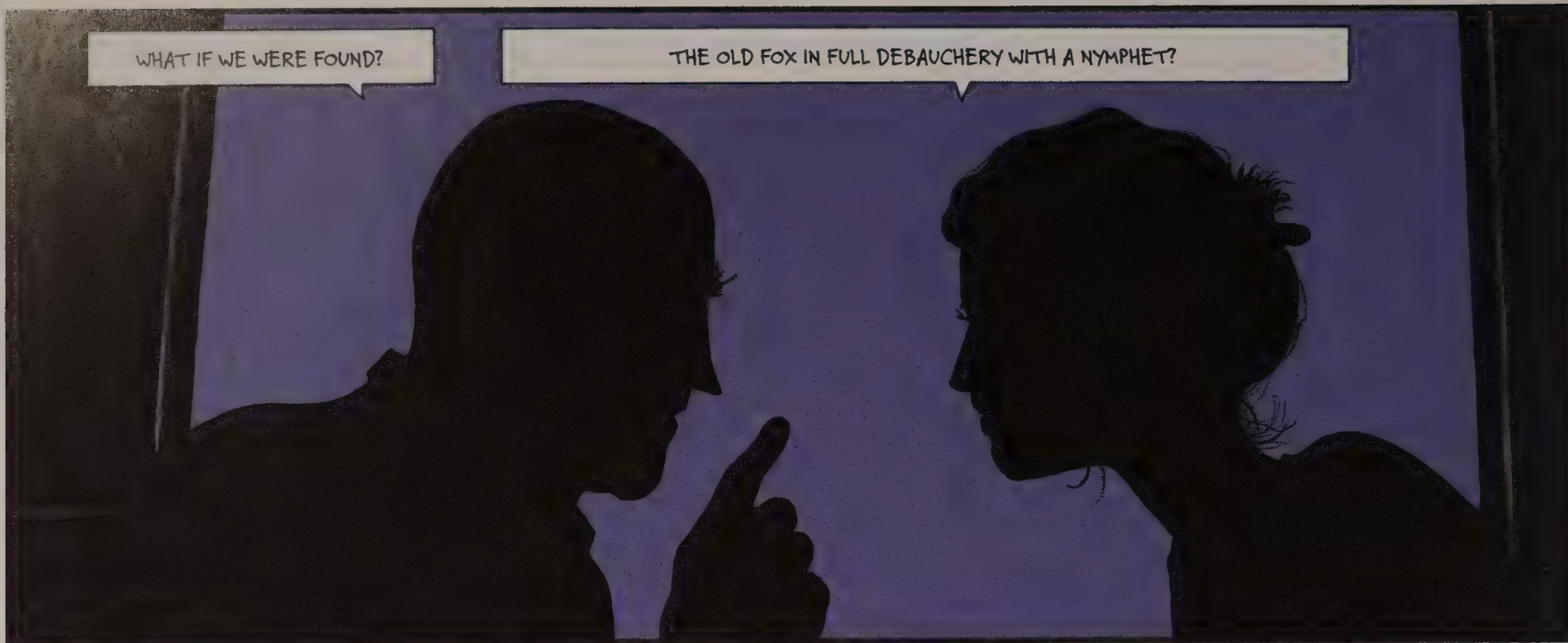
AFTER THE NUMBER WITH THE SHOES,
THEY'RE STARTING TO TELL THEMSELVES
IT'S A FUNNY KIND OF PUZZLE.

IN MY OPINION, THEY'RE
EXPECTING TO FIND YOU
CHOPPED INTO SMALL PIECES.



YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH,
HAVEN'T YOU? MAYBE WE
SHOULD CLOSE UP.

WHY SO SERIOUS? YOU'RE NO FUN.



WHAT IF WE WERE FOUND?

THE OLD FOX IN FULL DEBAUCHERY WITH A NYMPHET?

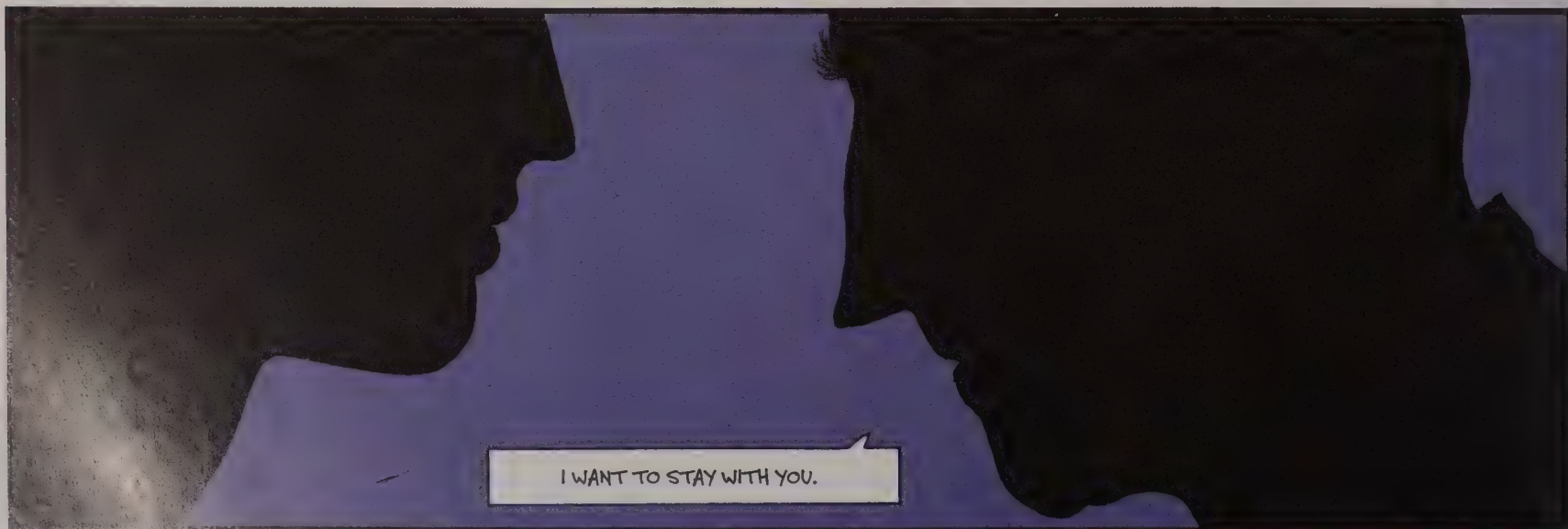


DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE
AFRAID OF A SCANDAL.
THAT'S NOT YOUR TYPE.

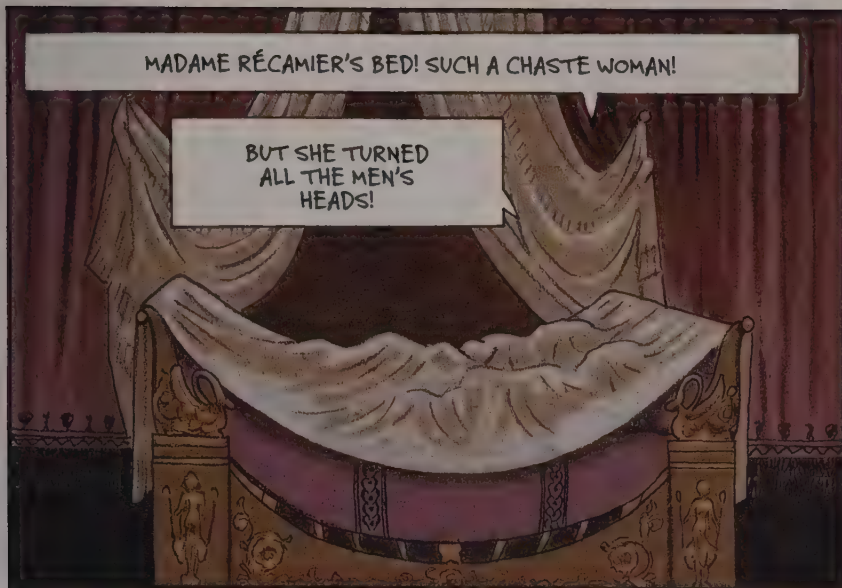


OF COURSE
I DON'T
CARE ABOUT
SCANDALS... WHAT
DO I HAVE
TO LOSE?

I JUST DON'T WANT
US TO BE FOUND,
THAT'S ALL.



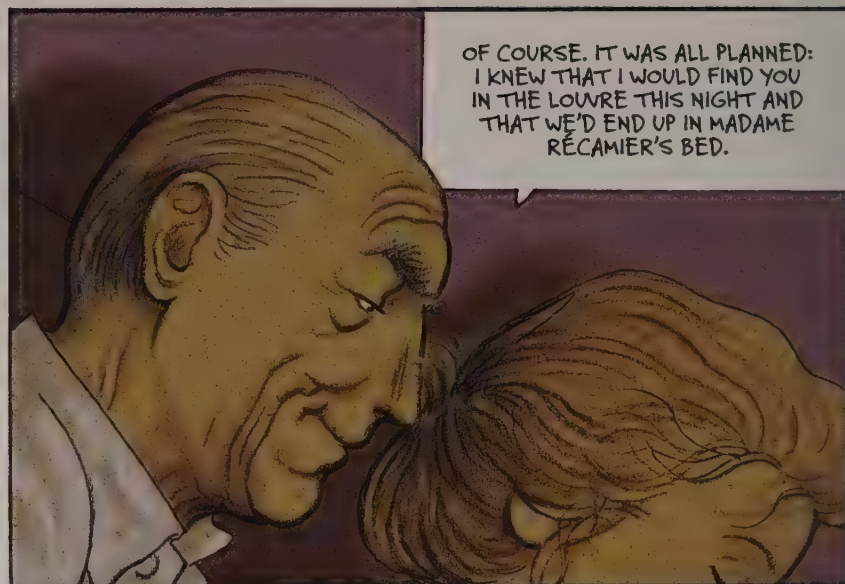
I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU.





THE CYANIDE
WAS IN MY
COAT.

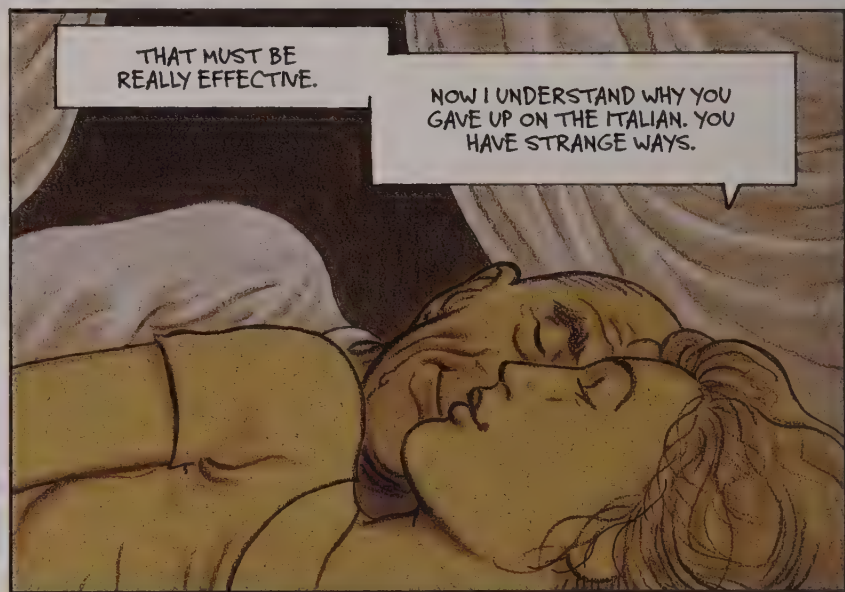
WERE YOU REALLY
PLANNING TO GET ME
TO SWALLOW IT?



OF COURSE. IT WAS ALL PLANNED:
I KNEW THAT I WOULD FIND YOU
IN THE LOUVRE THIS NIGHT AND
THAT WE'D END UP IN MADAME
RÉCAMIER'S BED.

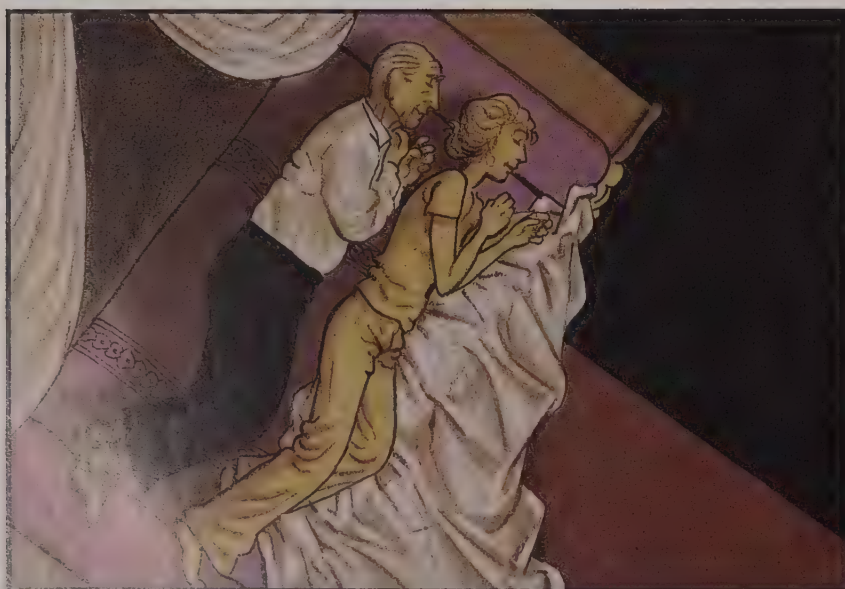


DISCREETLY, I'D HAVE OPENED MY LITTLE BOTTLE
AND POURED IT LIKE THIS, IN YOUR EAR.



THAT MUST BE
REALLY EFFECTIVE.

NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU
GAVE UP ON THE ITALIAN. YOU
HAVE STRANGE WAYS.



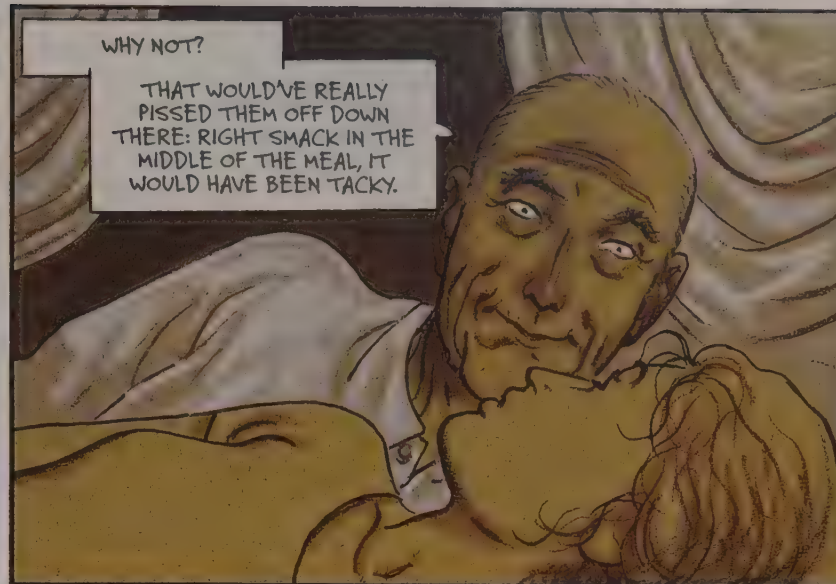
I'M ILL. VERY ILL.

THE CYANIDE
WAS FOR ME.



TO LEAVE AS I WISH, WHEN I WISH.
ONE MUST KNOW WHEN
TO LEAVE THE BANQUET.

AND YOU
WANTED TO
LEAVE TONIGHT?



WHY NOT?

THAT WOULD'VE REALLY
PISSED THEM OFF DOWN
THERE: RIGHT SMACK IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE MEAL, IT
WOULD HAVE BEEN TACKY.



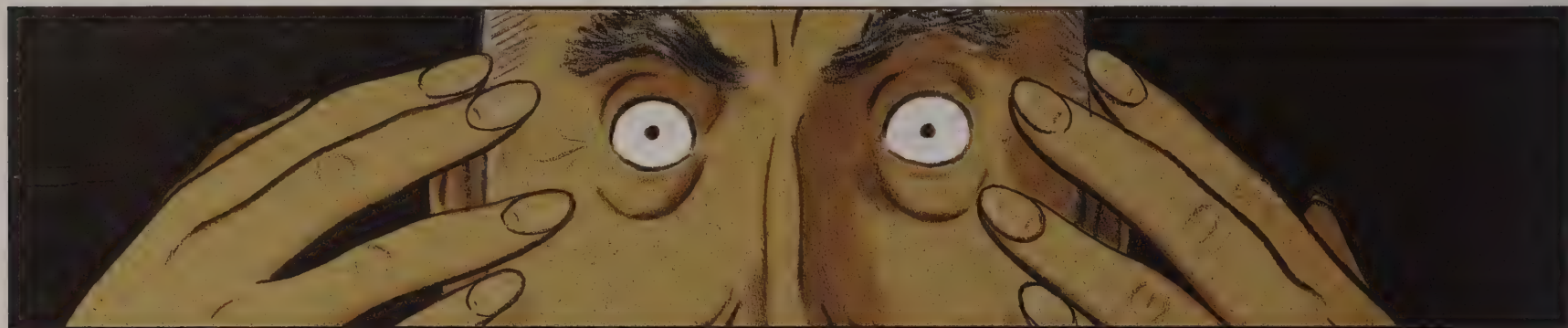
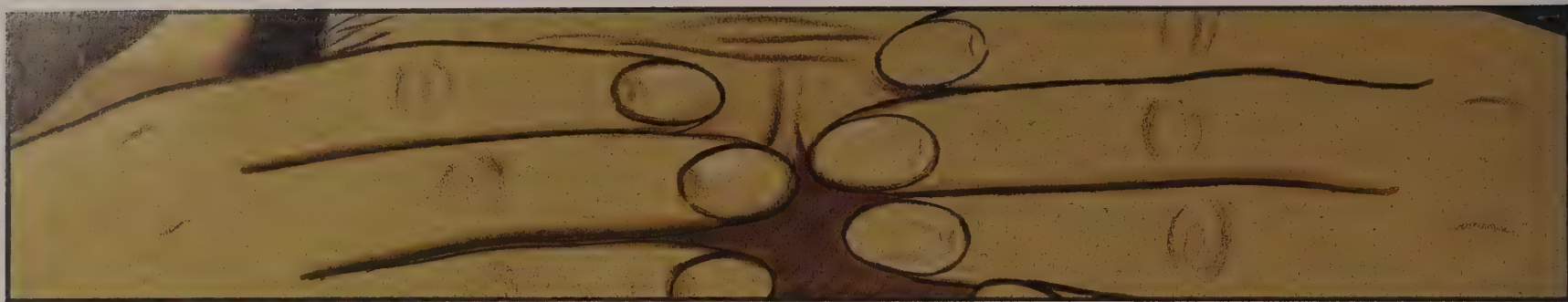
AND THE EMPEROR!
HIS CORONATION
PERFECTLY
BOTCHED. YOU
GET MY DRIFT.



IT WAS THE RIGHT
TIME, WASN'T IT?

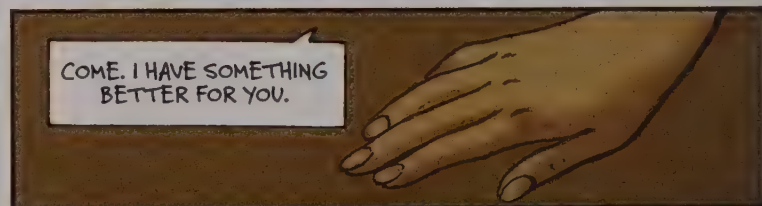


NOW, YOU'RE HERE.



ARE YOU
STARTING
WITH THAT,
TOO!?

IT WAS A
JOKE, MILORD.



COME. I HAVE SOMETHING
BETTER FOR YOU.



DELIGHTFUL!



YOU SEE, WHEN
YOU TRY A
LITTLE.

YOU'RE
PREDICTABLE.



IS THAT PRETTY, ROUND,
OH SO DISCREET BREAST
TITILLATING YOU?

COME ON!

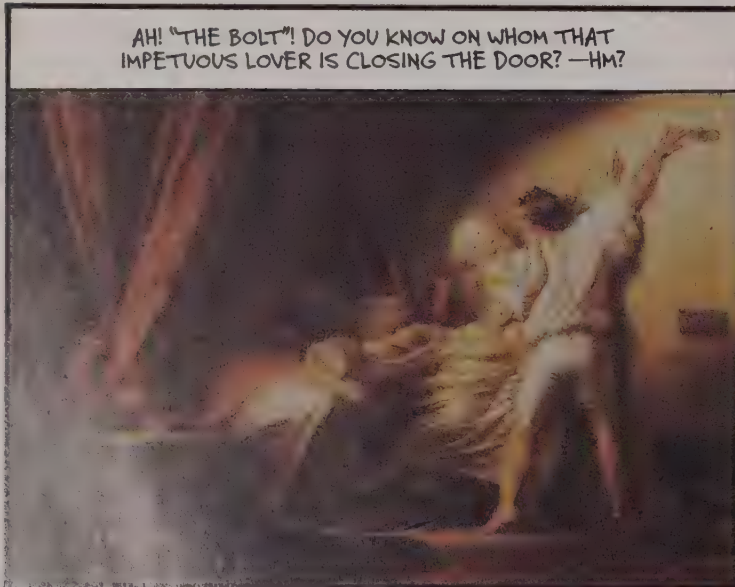
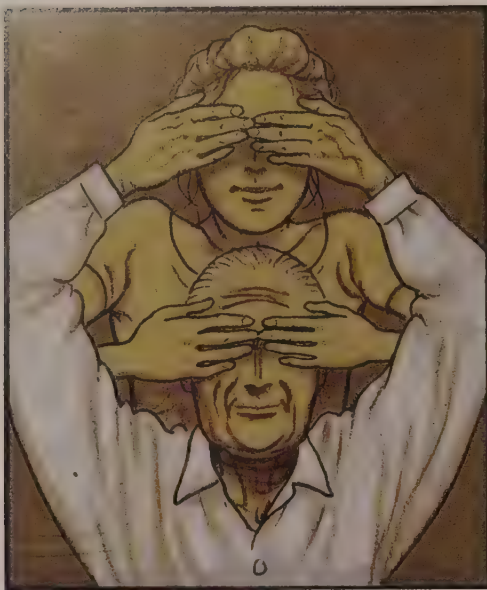


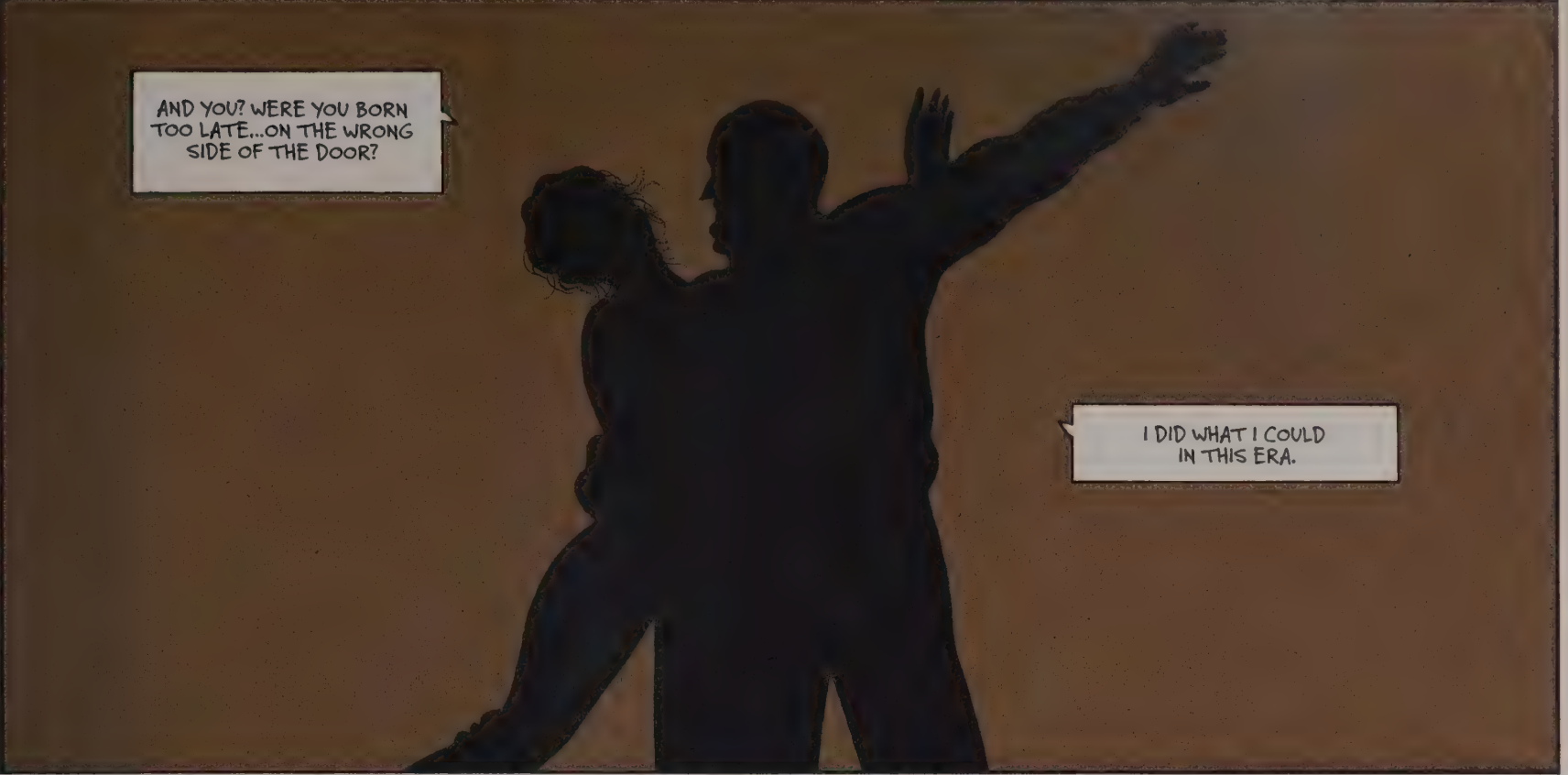
ANOTHER ONE?

ANOTHER.



AGAIN! AGAIN!






AND YOU? WERE YOU BORN
TOO LATE...ON THE WRONG
SIDE OF THE DOOR?

I DID WHAT I COULD
IN THIS ERA.



SHH! THERE'S A COMMOTION.
THERE'S MORE OF THEM.



DON'T WORRY, WE'VE
ALMOST ARRIVED.

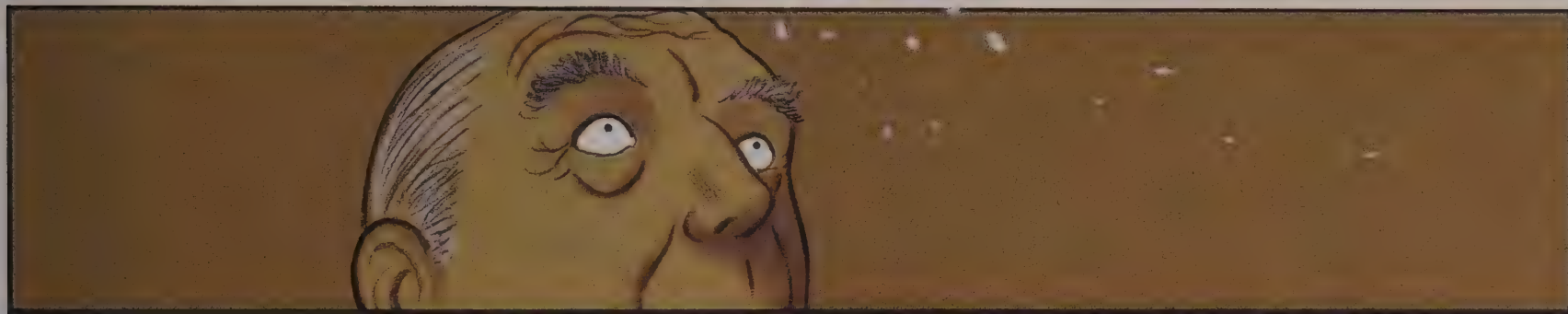
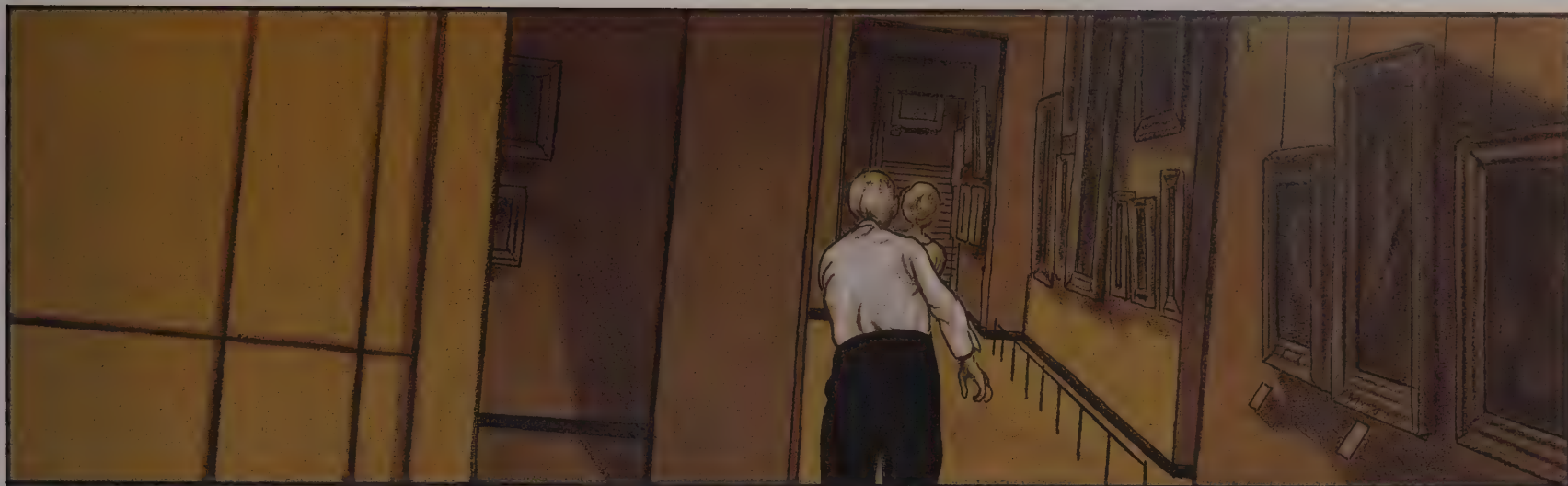


ARRIVED?

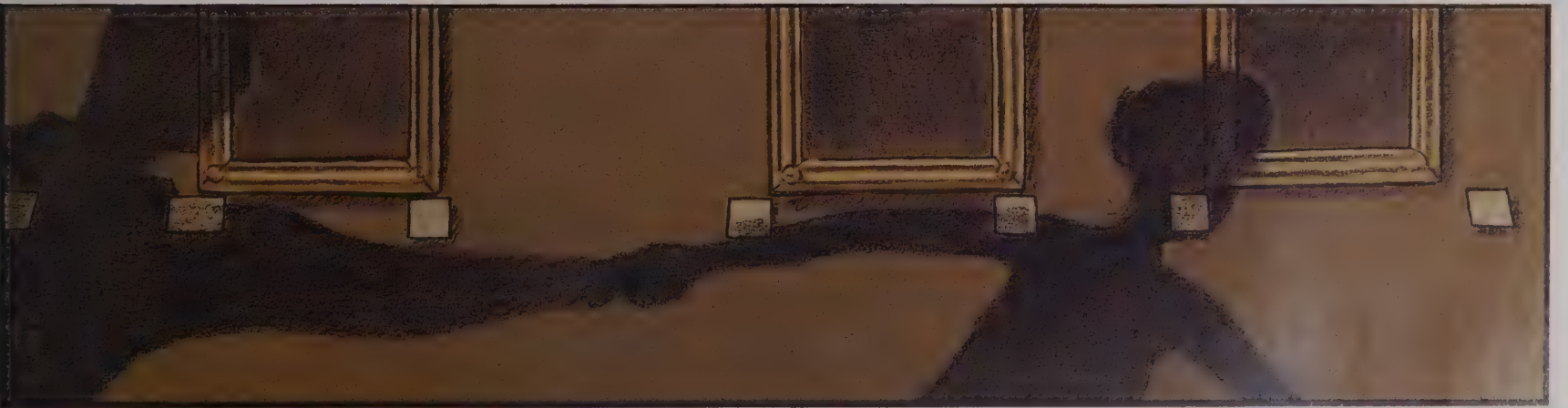
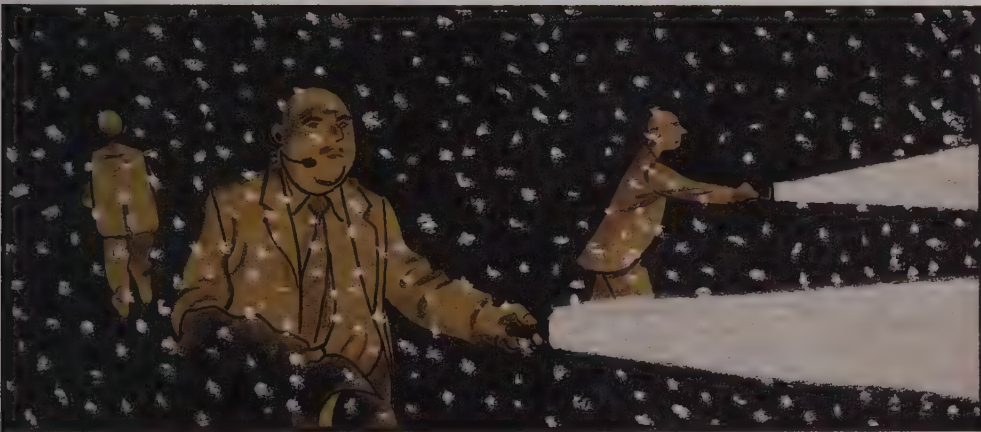
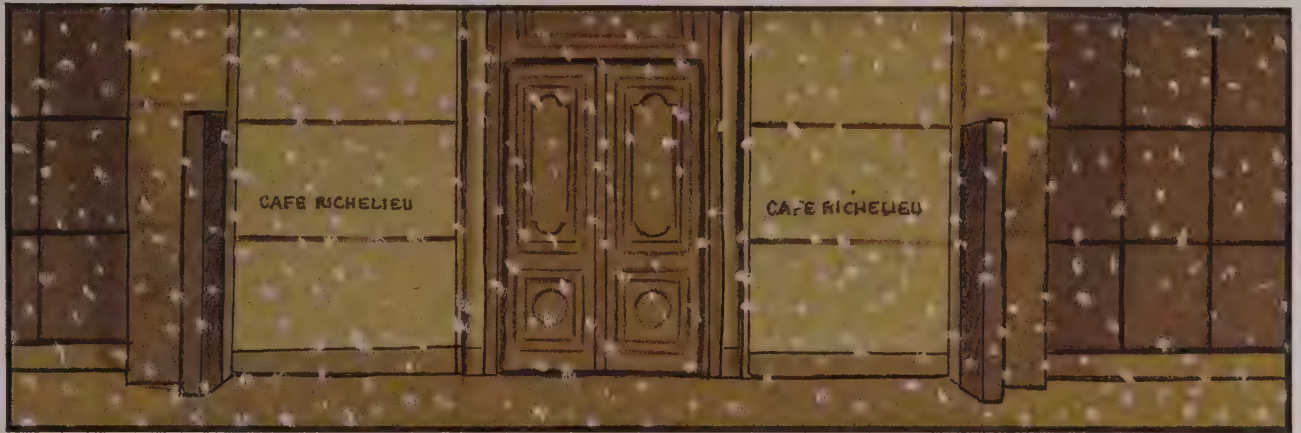
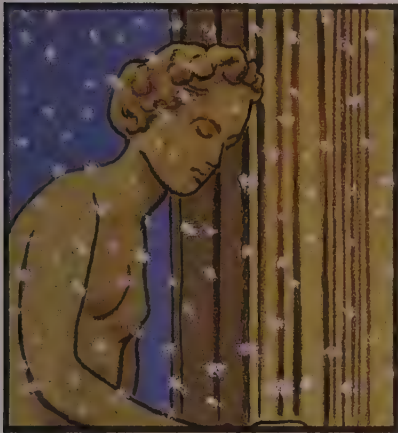
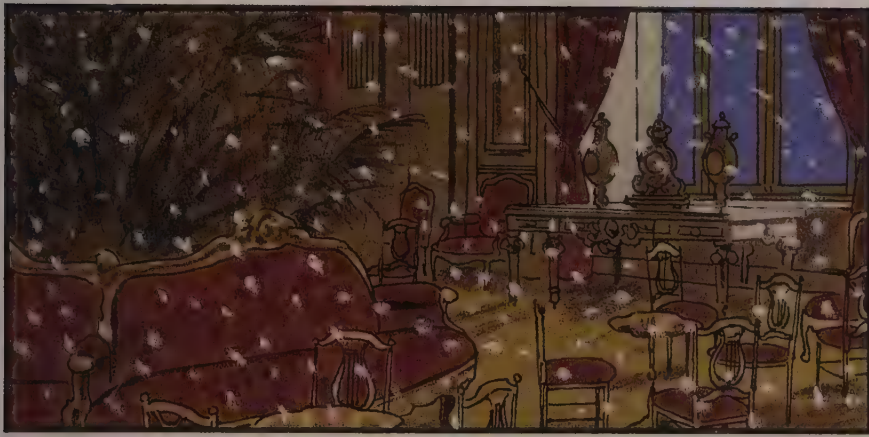


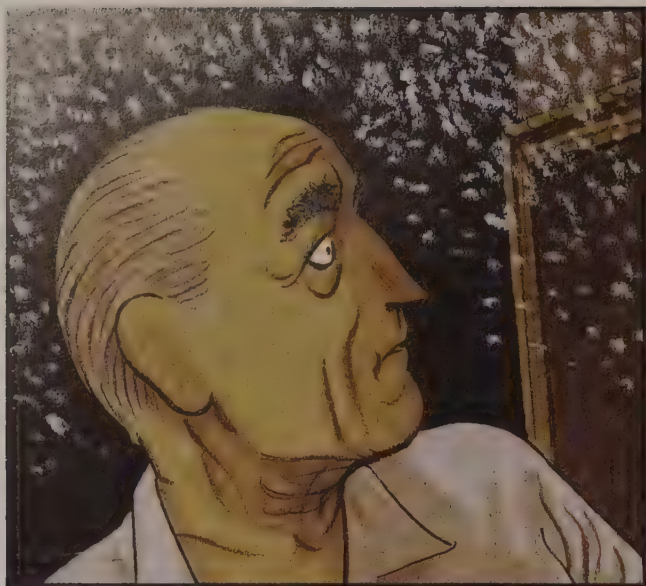
THIS WAY.







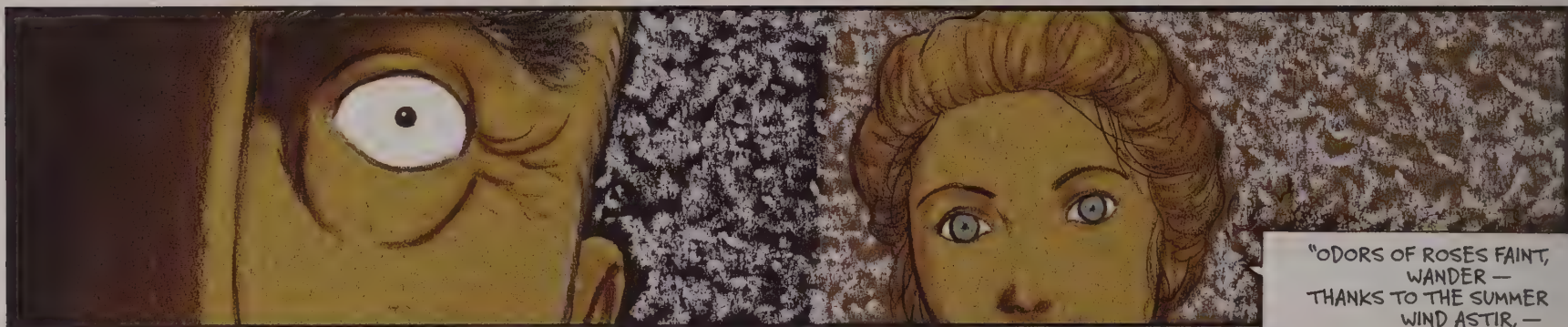








IT'S VERY MOVING. HOW MANY YEARS HAS
IT BEEN SINCE LAST I SAW IT?

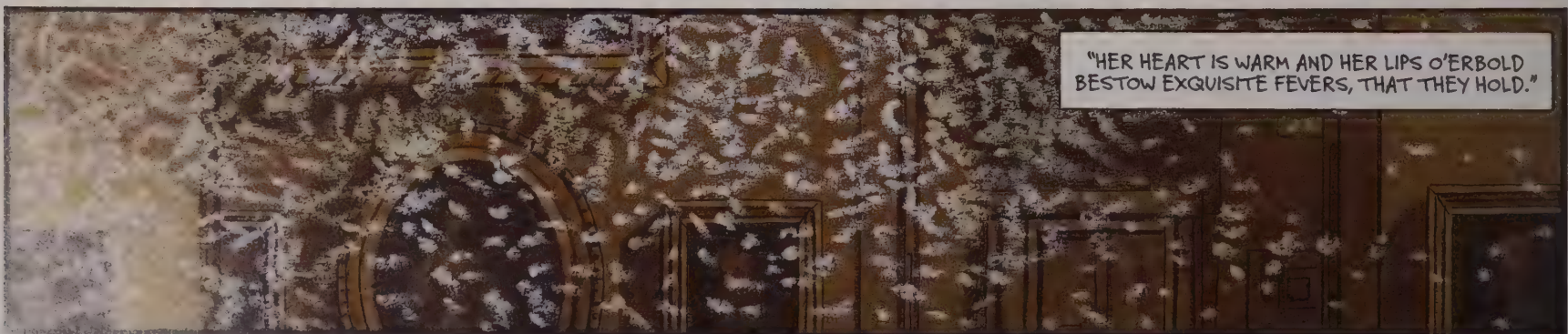


"ODORS OF ROSES FAINT,
WANDER —
THANKS TO THE SUMMER
WIND ASTIR, —



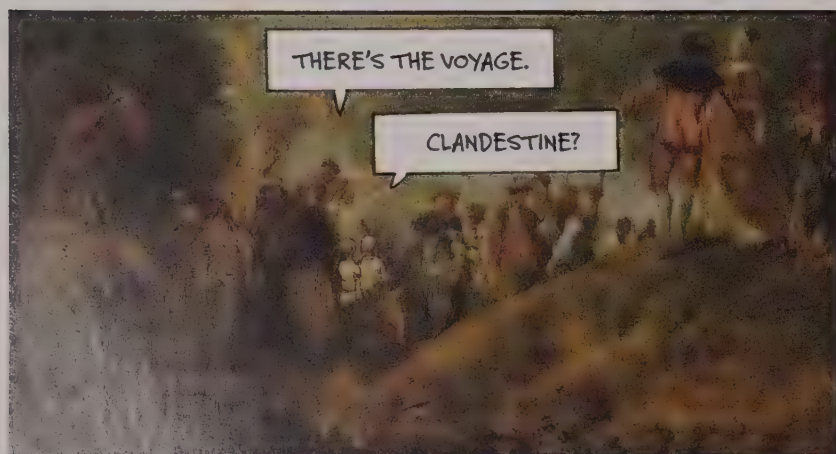
"AND MIX WITH PERFUME COME FROM HER.

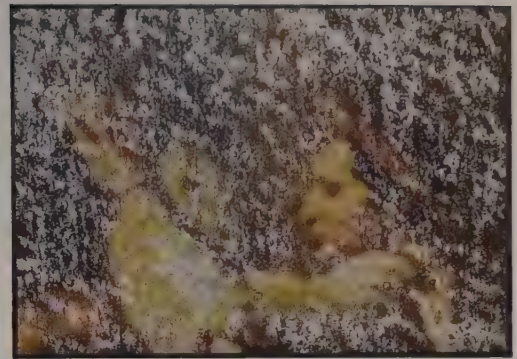
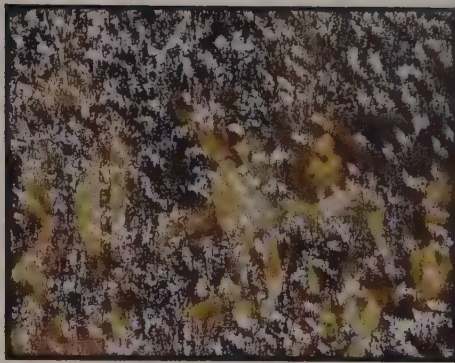
"AS HER EYES FORETOLD



"HER HEART IS WARM AND HER LIPS O'ERBOLD
BESTOW EXQUISITE FEVERS, THAT THEY HOLD."







AND THE SEA?

LUMINOUS.



THE BOAT?

SLOW. VERY SLOW.



NEVER ENDING?

NEVER ENDING.

La Laiterie, mai 2011

Christian Dupieux

To love museums, you must love ghosts



At the Louvre, there is the ghost of Leonardo and that of Mona Lisa, but also the ghost of Francis I, who bought the Gioconda, and of Vincenzo Perugia, the glazier who stole it in 1911. There are the ghosts of the Greeks massacred at Scio and of the plague victims of Jaffa and of Delacroix who painted their suffering, there are the ghosts of Nazi boots. The Louvre is bestirred by silent movements, rustlings, tears, and hidden smiles. And there is the "fête gualante", the garden party, the ghost of Watteau and those of its actors.

Antoine Watteau died in 1721, well before the French Revolution, well before the other century. He was only 37 years old and he will remain the painter of the "fête galante." It has been said elsewhere that the Royal Academy created this genre for him especially when, in 1717, he presented the painting which gained him reception into that grand institution: The Pilgrimage to Cythera. It may be only a legend but no matter.

With Watteau, a gentle wind breathes through the Louvre, that of Zephyrs who, according to Hesiod, transported the young goddess of Love, Aphrodite, to the isle of Cythera. With Watteau, an enchanted world, elegant, delicate, melancholic too, traverses

the Louvre's rooms. You dream that, beneath the ample folds, her step barely brushes the soil. The actors are blurry. The garden party is a theater, you're there, but you're hiding, women are often shown from behind, in the distance. They must be divined. You must see them under their napes.

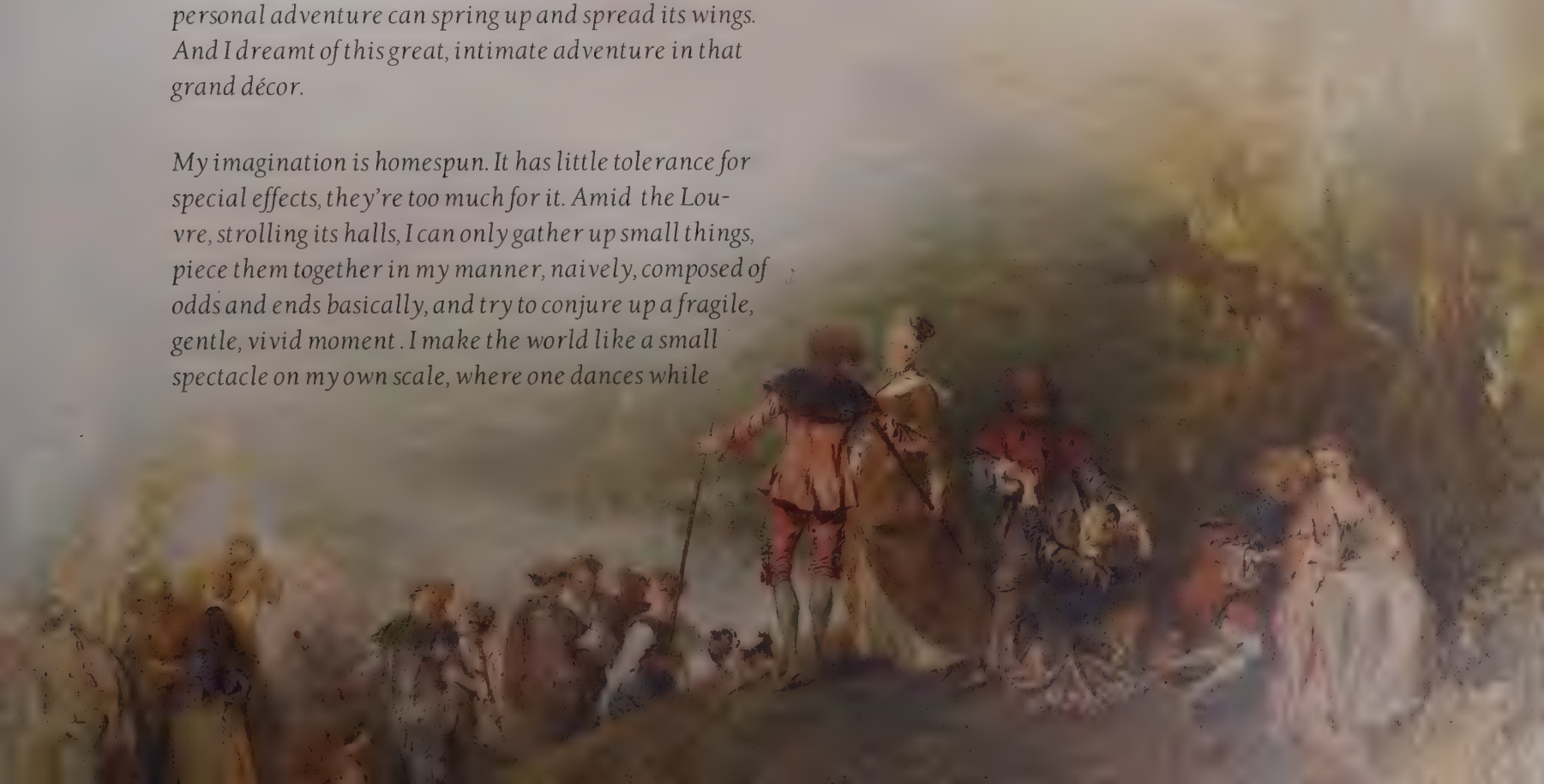
In Watteau's paintings, there's the landscape, and mythology isn't far away either, but there's the intimate, the intimacy of two bodies seeking one another, whispering to one another. When I dreamt of the Louvre to create a story about it, I dreamt of intimacy in that grand theater décor. Great museums are like great cities: seen from without, their grandeur impresses, from within they are villages, minuscule patches where a personal adventure can spring up and spread its wings. And I dreamt of this great, intimate adventure in that grand décor.

My imagination is homespun. It has little tolerance for special effects, they're too much for it. Amid the Louvre, strolling its halls, I can only gather up small things, piece them together in my manner, naively, composed of odds and ends basically, and try to conjure up a fragile, gentle, vivid moment. I make the world like a small spectacle on my own scale, where one dances while

finding one's steps, where the roles are exchanged: who's leading whom on this night which is a pilgrimage, a fête galante made for only two people?

The night concludes at the embarkation for the isle of Cythera. A gentle voyage. But the voyage is also a departure and you cannot stop yourself from casting a final glance over your shoulder towards what you've accomplished, or haven't. Jean Cocteau, whom I love, classified the entirety of his disparate works under the heading of poetry: poetry of theater, poetry of the novel, poetry of cinema, critical poetry or of the quotidian. Quite naively, I'd like to create a poetry of comic books.

Christian Durieux



List of works
selected by the author,
in order of
appearance.

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The Winged Victory of Samothrace
Circa 190 B.C.E.
Ma 2369
DENON-Ground Floor
Greek, Etruscan and Roman
Antiquities
Stairs of the Winged Victory
Of Samothrace-Daru Stairway

PAGE 6

Jacques-Louis DAVID
Leonidas at Thermopylae
1814
INV. 3690
Acquired in 1819
DENON-First Floor
19th-Century French Paintings
Large Formats
Room 75 Daru, Neo-classicism

PAGE 6

Jacques-Louis DAVID
*The Consecration of Emperor
Napoleon I and the Crowning
of Empress Josephine
in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame
de Paris. December 2, 1804*
1806-1807
Salon of 1808
Commissioned by Napoleon
INV. 3699
DENON-First Floor
19th-Century French Paintings,
Large Formats,
Room 75 Daru, neoclassicism

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Jacques-Louis DAVID
*The Intervention of
the Sabine Women*
1799
INV. 3691
DENON-First Floor
19th-Century French Paintings,
Large Formats,
Room 75 Daru, neoclassicism

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INGRES
Louis-François Bertin
1832
R.F. 1071
DENON-First Floor
19th-Century French Paintings,
Large Formats,
Room 75 Daru, neoclassicism

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Eugène DELACROIX
*Liberty Guiding the People
(July 28, 1830)*
1830, Salon of 1831
Acquired at the Salon
R.F. 129
DENON-First Floor
19th-Century French Paintings,
Large Formats,
Room 77 Mollien, Romanticism

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surrounded by six angels (Maestà)*
Circa 1280
Entered in the Louvre in 1813
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Room 3 Square Salon

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Tori, known as BRONZINO
*Portrait of a man holding
a statuette*
Wood transposed onto canvas
Collection of Louis XIV
(acquired from Jabach in 1671)
INV. 131
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Room 5 Grand Gallery,
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Italy
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Giovanni Andrea SIRANI
Saint Cecilia
Circa 1640 (?)
Gift of the Baroness
Salomon de Rothschild, 1926
R.F. 3828
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Room 5 Grand Gallery,
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Italy
15th-16th Centuries

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*The Mystic Marriage of Saint
Catherine*
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Acquired in 1740
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Collection of Louis XIV
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Adapted from Louis BERTHAULT
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Paris, circa 1799
Mahogany, gilded and finished
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Gift of the Society of the Friends
of the Louvre, 1991
OA 11344
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Circa 1716
Acquired in 1990
(thanks to an anonymous
donation and the bequest
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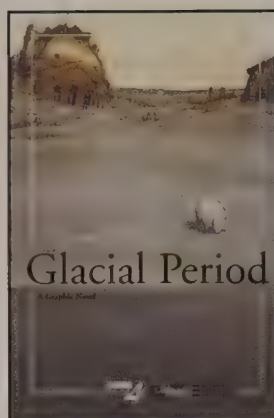
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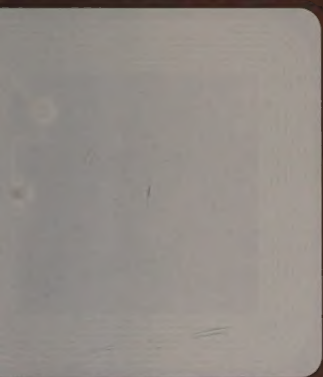
Verlaine poem "Cythere" on p.60 translated by Bergen
 Weeks Applegate in Paul Verlaine: His Absinthe-tinted
 Song, a Monograph On the Poet, With Selections From His
 Work. Chicago: R. F. Seymour, The Alderbrink press, 1916.

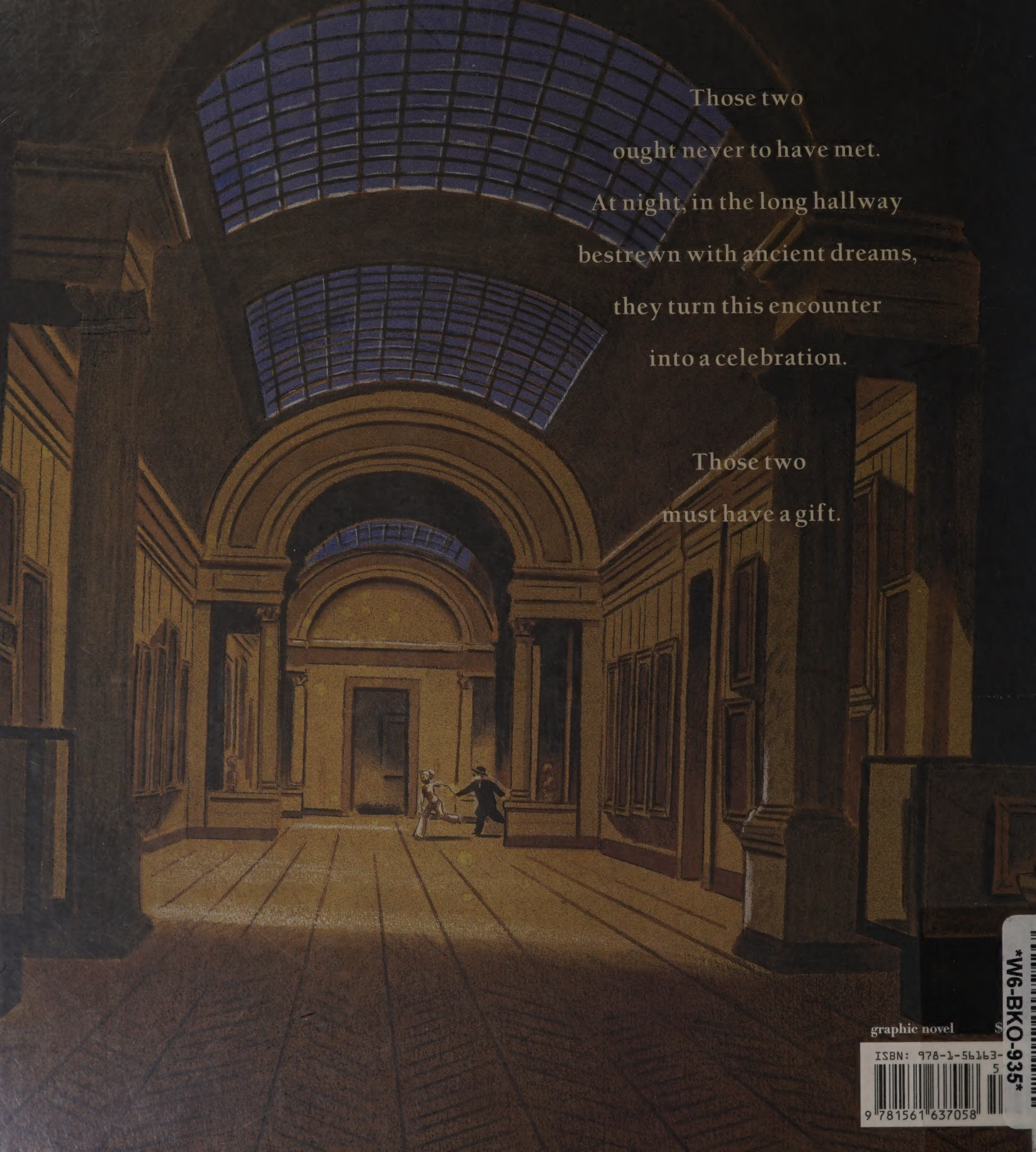


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ought never to have met.
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bestrewn with ancient dreams,
they turn this encounter
into a celebration.

Those two
must have a gift.

graphic novel

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